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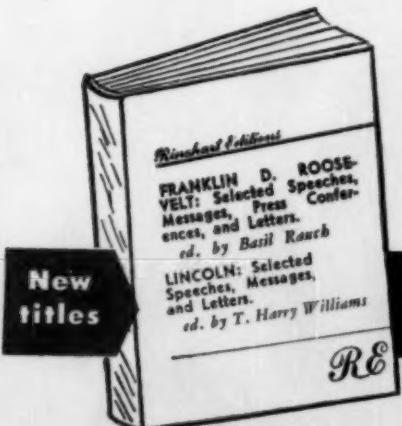
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## For Contributors

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## For Readers

**ROY HARVEY PEARCE**, well-known teacher and scholar in the American field, considers "American Studies as a Discipline," adapted from a paper delivered at the Ohio-Indiana ASA in 1955. Co-editor of the latest anthology-text (reviewed in this issue), he is a professor at Ohio State, where he went from Berkeley and Johns Hopkins. **RUTH N. MYERS**, assistant professor at New Haven S.T.C., went to Texas, Columbia, and Yale. The experience behind her "Notes" is suggested in the article. **HARRY R. WARFEL**, who analyzes Whitman's poetic structure, is a professor at Florida and the new president of the College English Association. With degrees from Bucknell and Yale, he taught at Bucknell and Maryland before going to Florida. *American English in Its Cultural Setting* (with Donald Lloyd) is the latest of his sixteen books. **ROBERT C. ROBY**, assistant professor at Marquette, with all his degrees from Northwestern, carefully adjudicates between the pretension and the achievement of *Winterset*. **KEMP MALONE** ("Syllabication") is of course the noted elder statesman of scholarship, author of many books and articles on medieval literature and current speech, professor at Johns Hopkins. **RANDALL STEWART**, a frequent contributor to *CE* as well as to other journals, is another well-known quantity and quality: our chief Hawthorne scholar, chairman at Vanderbilt, and force for good in all directions. He delivered a version of "Present Trends" on 23 November last at the NCTE convention in St. Louis. **GERHARD FRIEDRICH** outlines a new Haverford course in American literature; an assistant professor there, he took his Ph.D. at Minnesota, and has published articles on Dreiser, Joyce, and Emerson, among others. **JOSEPH SLATER**, who suggests that teaching "The Star-Spangled Banner" is good pedagogy, is an assistant professor at Rutgers

who has been printed in *SP*, *PMLA*, *MLQ*; his degrees are from Colgate and Columbia. **JAMES WOODRESS**, associate professor at Butler, author of books on Howells, Tarkington, and Barlow (to come), took his doctor's degree at Duke. His article is based on his compilation *Dissertations on American Literature, 1891-1955*, just published by Duke. **MARTHA WINBURN ENGLAND**, instructor at Queens, contributes a helpful approach to teaching Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. With graduate degrees from Radcliffe, she also translates and adapts works from the French and Italian, especially in the operatic field. **RALPH W. CONDEE** and **ARTHUR O. LEWIS, JR.** are new contributors to the News and Ideas department. Associate professors at Penn State, they collaborated with the Editor on *The Case for Poetry*. Lewis, whose work was done at Harvard and Penn State, is a published specialist in the American field, and Condee, from Illinois and Chicago, has printed many items in the Renaissance area, especially about Milton. **WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR**, professor at Minnesota and author of a half-dozen books, mostly about modern writing, calls attention to an important new anthology in "The Middle Generation of American Poets." **MAURICE BEEBE** follows this with "A Survey of Short-Story Textbooks," the second in a *CE* series designed to cover a lot of ground for syllabus-making and text-ordering teachers. Beebe, an assistant professor at Purdue, has published in *SAQ*, *PMLA*, *NCF*, and *CE*, not to mention *MFS*, of which he is Managing Editor. *Notes:* (1) The November issue assigned **ROBERT POOLEY** to Michigan; "This will come as a surprise," he writes, "to the administration of the University of Wisconsin, which has faithfully paid my salary for some 26 years." (2) All unsigned material is written by the Editor.



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# COLLEGE ENGLISH

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## American Studies as a Discipline

ROY HARVEY PEARCE

MY TITLE, as do most titles like it, conceals a rhetorical question. It is, of course: *Is American Studies a discipline?* Is it (to follow the *ACD* on "discipline") a branch of learning which can be differentiated by its rules of operation from other branches? And the answer implied in asking the question is one which, at the outset at least, most of us would immediately give: No, not really, not now, not yet; but American Studies could well become a discipline.

We must begin by examining the implications of that answer. It seems to me that in giving it thus, we tend too often to feel that we have relieved ourselves of the burden of thinking hard about both the question and the professional obligation which are entailed in so answering it. We tend, indeed, to believe in some Wave of the Future which will, in time, automatically roll us on toward our goal of having a discipline. As a result, we are satisfied too often with participating in American Studies Programs whose end we see but dimly, because we do not struggle, as we must, to do American Studies research. Our pressing need, in my view, is to define the sort of research which should be our immediate concern. To put my conclusion bluntly: If we are to have our discipline of American Studies, research must come first and programs second.

### I

My own pedagogical situation, of course, gives me a bias in this matter, and

it must be commented on briefly. At my own university we have no American Studies program. This, so far at least as my department is concerned, is a deliberate decision. In those eager, blissful days immediately after the War, we set up the skeleton for such a program (everybody was doing it), but it remained and remains only a skeleton. We could not bring ourselves to encourage students to take work in an interdisciplinary program which seemed certain only to teach them many ways of looking unskillfully, or semi-skillfully, at the same subject-matter. We realized that the many ways, if they did not have to be one way, at least had to be interrelated ways; that there had to be some inclusive principle of operation for such a program; that there had to be, at least hypothetically, a discipline. We wanted to work toward such a discipline; and the place for this was, obviously, the Graduate School, where students would be mature and well-trained enough to experiment as well as be experimented upon. We taught American Literature; we wanted American Literature to be part of the study of American Civilization. What we did, what we have done, is nothing more than the obvious thing: When we feel that our graduate students are adequately trained in literary study (which is a discipline), we encourage them, if they feel drawn to it, to work in research problems grounded in literary study and yet move into other areas. We encourage them to try to discover a principle whereby literary study might be integrated with

other disciplines. I even go so far as to give a seminar in the essentially methodological aspects of integrating literary study (not necessarily American) with the study of culture in general. And some of my students and those of my colleagues often write dissertations which would nominally be included in the American Studies area. That is to say, they have done the sort of research, they have asked the sort of questions, which begins to make our discipline seem possible and even likely of realization. When, through their work and that of so many others, the discipline has been achieved, then and only then will we think that it is time to set up a program. Then we shall have another not unskillful way of looking at our subject-matter, American Civilization. Meantime, we make haste slowly.

Whether or not the logic of our position is unassailable is a question I mean to raise by writing this paper. In any case, our position is not that of the majority of those who are interested in American Studies. One has only to glance at the several essays and one book published on the subject to see that the general tendency is to set up a program, interdisciplinary in nature, in which students, graduate or undergraduate, do work in a number of courses regularly set up by established disciplines, and then supplement that course work by some sort of integrating "seminar" or "thesis." All those who write on the subject, of course, insist that it is the integration which is all important. But my own study of their writing makes me believe that they tend at worst to give not much more than enthusiastic lip service to the problem of integration, or at best to think that the problem is not a problem at all. Somehow, they seem to believe, the urgency of our need for interdisciplinary integration will of itself create a new discipline. Meantime, the teacher whose field is literature, history, economics, fine arts, or sociology will cultivate his own field so that he can all the more expertly teach his students what it has

to contribute to their new integrated course of study. The director of that course—so one authority in the field, Lewis Filler, has recently suggested—had best be trained in two fields. But where, one asks, is the teacher who will be trained to think explicitly in terms of the new integrated field itself? Who will teach this teacher? Can he be produced in programs which seem to an outsider to emphasize disciplinary pluralism—this in spite of much preliminary talk about integration and so on? He should, ideally, think of his pedagogical task as one and not several.

We should at least imagine him and what he would do, set him up as an ideal type, want to be him, and work toward being him. This would mean creative research and concern with its theories and methods first—and programs after.

I can make clear my view of our situation by quoting and commenting on a statement with which few would disagree, from Professor Richard Hubler's recent "A Theory of American Studies":

The American Studies movement is not only part of a general tendency in higher education; it is related to certain important ideas which have been surging through American thought. These ideas stress the importance of looking at reality as a whole, of analyzing the functional interrelationships between the parts within the whole. This tendency is reflected in the contemporary importance of organic architecture, functionalism in anthropology, gestalt psychology, holistic or heterodox economics, and to some extent cultural history. These intellectual movements do not limit their view of reality to a single discipline, but conceive of their discipline as a functioning element interrelated with other disciplines within the culture. In both popular, as well as more formal thought, particularly since the 1930's, the American Studies movement has been an expression of a lively interest and curiosity in things American. (*Social Education*, XIII, 1954, 268)

Now, the passage contains a wholly estimable idea. Yet the idea is rendered a

little suspect by its expression. There is in it a tendency, typical in writing about American Studies, to use words as magic: Name it, the formula goes, and you have it. Or to construct the logic of the argument: American Studies is a tendency like other tendencies; out of these other tendencies emerge ways of looking at reality as a functioning whole; therefore American Studies is a way of looking at reality—American reality, American civilization—as a functioning whole. Certainly, we all say, it should be. But is it? It is significant that Hubler nowhere else in his essay (except for a couple of brief paragraphs on the concept of "culture") treats of the methodological problems involved at looking at American Civilization or any civilization as a whole. He ends by surveying programs. And a Theory of American Studies turns out here, as in all such discussions which I know, to be a *Conspectus of Practice in American Studies Programs*. (Where all is *Is*, the moralist might say, there is no need for *Ought*.) Indeed, when Hubler gets down to cases, he is sure that there has been good and effective teaching in such programs; but he has his doubts about the research and scholarship which have thus far come out of them. The good and effective teaching (that is to say) has been in American literature, history, economics, fine arts, sociology, etc., as they—fields cultivated for their own sakes—contribute to American Studies, not in something called American Studies itself. This would seem to be because there has been insufficient emphasis, or there is lack of a primary emphasis, on effective research and scholarship to make for the discipline which in turn would eventually make for effective teaching in American Studies.

It very well might be that the recent tendency to shift the name of our hypothetical discipline from American Civilization to American Studies is in itself expressive of our own doubts and uncertainties as to what we are doing. *Civilization*—to say this implies some integrated,

genuinely holistic view of the phenomenon; *Studies*—to say this implies an easy-going, and often irresponsible, pluralism. And so I return to my title. Having discussed it as an implied rhetorical question, I now find it inadequate for my purposes and revise it thus: American *Civilization* as a Discipline. And I shall try briefly to describe the criteria for our hypothetical discipline; and then to inquire into the case I like to think I know best, my own, and see where work in American Literature stands in relation to the establishing of our discipline.

## II

What is a discipline? The question urges itself on us again. I venture to expand upon the *ACD* definition and answer that it is a formalized method of knowing and expressing the knowledge of a given subject-matter, and that its form, to be valid and authentic, must reflect the form of its subject-matter. The subject-matter can be known variously; its form will be analogously various.

We may apply this expanded definition to our own case. Our subject-matter is American Civilization; we would see it as a whole; the hyperspecialization which we encounter in all departments of our lives, academic and non-academic, urges us to see this subject-matter as a whole. And this, as Hubler well points out, is a basic movement of thought in our time, which rises out of a basic need. The form of our discipline then must reflect our sense of the wholeness of our civilization. But the principle of wholeness of our civilization is surely the principle of wholeness of any civilization. What has eventuated is unique; and it is the recording, comprehending, and evaluating of that uniqueness toward which we must strive. Nonetheless, a study of American Civilization must be a study of Civilization first and of America second. We must avoid disciplinary as well as political-moral isolationism. We must understand the general integrating principles which have been

evolved in such disciplines as functionalist anthropology, gestalt psychology, holistic economics (to recall some of Hubler's examples) and then begin to try to see how these general principles can be worked toward more specialized principles which will let us view civilizations, our own included, as wholes. We must see what new formal categories will emerge. And we must let the nature of these categories dictate to us the nature of the questions we will ask, the research we will do, the interpretations we will make, and finally the teaching we will do.

Put this way—in terms of criteria of whose exact nature we are as yet not even sure—the establishing of a disciplined way of looking at American Civilization seems to be something which will be achieved, if it can be achieved, only in the far distant future. But I think that this is not quite so. Certainly, we have much—very, very much—to do. But a good deal has already been done. Ironically enough, in literary studies at least, we haven't made ourselves sufficiently aware of the implications of what has been done—as though the shock of discovering what we wanted was so great that we couldn't quite bring ourselves to take bearings, out of a fear that we would discover that we had so far got nowhere. What has resulted is a kind of methodological chauvinism, to give it its properly ugly name.

We have, in effect, looked to the hazy but magically appealing organic, holistic, interdisciplinary future, assured ourselves it was there, and then got back to cultivating our own fields—meantime encouraging students to participate in programs oriented toward that very hazy future which is too far off for our own comfort. Yet a lot has been done. We are on the way toward establishing the study of American (or any other) Civilization as a discipline. And we have got there, when we have, precisely by cultivating our own fields in such a way as to try to relate them to other fields. More important, others (not at all concerned with American Civilization as

such) have been doing just this for us. So that in many of the special, established disciplines, there is now a tendency to move toward a common center, that of the study of civilization. This is, or should be, the meaning for us of functionalist anthropology, gestalt psychology, holistic economics, and the rest. And it is primarily in working thus—in striving to develop in research and writing this tendency of our own special established disciplines—that we will begin to realize the possibilities of American Studies, or of American Civilization, as a discipline. Teaching in Programs will not make it so, because teaching proceeds from, rather than establishes, a discipline. Working in research and writing toward our common goal must be the primary way of establishing our discipline.

I can speak specifically of what has been done and is being done in my own field of specialization, in my own established discipline—American Literature: or more accurately, Literature, with a special interest in American Literature. There is emerging what can be called a functionalist mode of literary analysis. Its practitioners strive to see in what way, and to what effect, and for what value, a literary work is an "expression" of the civilization out of which it comes. Doing so, they begin to bring literature as an expression into focus with other modes of expression—history, philosophy, etc. Doing this, in turn they bring expressive modes into focus with other modes of living—stitutions like family, state, economic structure, etc. They work toward a sense of wholeness. Eventually, their work will be part and parcel of the total study of civilization. And then it will indeed be possible for American Civilization to be a discipline—or more precisely, a special field of concentration within a discipline, the "holistic" study of civilization.

We should take special note in current literary studies of two leading historical-critical methods which move toward the study of literature in its cultural context. I

speak now of those historical-critical methods which center on the history of ideas and on the study of myth—both of which have been put to use in disciplined American Studies. Each initially depends—or can be made to depend—upon some sort of formalist analysis of literary texts, so that the literary work can be known for what it is expressively, as an esthetic whole, realization of which is an end in and of itself. But these historical-critical disciplines derive from the notion that if the literary work must not mean but be, yet by virtue of being something, it does something, and does it in a working relation to what is done by other kinds of expression, other kinds of activities, other institutions, in the culture in which it exists. For all the bitter, diatribic differences of their proponents, these historical-critical methods strive to answer the same question: How, and in what sense, and to what end, is literature a part of culture?

Of the two historical-critical methods, that centering on the history of ideas is, of course, the one which has been more influential in American Studies. The great strength of the method is its conception of ideas as, in their cultural contexts, minimal units of understanding and communication. Writing as an historian of ideas, ideally one proceeds by rigorous logic—initially setting up all logically deducible possibilities of a given belief or interest, and then looking to see which of those possibilities have been realized, in what circumstances, and with what connections. One strives to study exhaustively the range of the dialectic immanent in a writer's, or group of writers', work. For the student of literature, the history of ideas offers a way of analyzing literary texts along with non-literary texts and of seeing what the two have in common, how they exist in the same cultural situation. They are seen as at once being produced by and being productive of the same range of ideas—propositions, implicit or explicit, which resolve major human "prob-

lems." What the method does not offer, and what I think its chief practitioner, Professor Lovejoy, never meant it to offer, is a way of accounting for and comprehending ideas as they achieve specifically literary (or any other form of) expression. The history of ideas is unfortunately so powerful a method of historical-cultural analysis, that it tempts the unwary to push it beyond its limits, which are primarily those of analysis—historically arranged, dialectically arranged analysis, it is true, but nonetheless primarily analysis.

The historical-critical method centering on the study of myth has become so powerful recently, I venture to say, because its practitioners have feared the tendency to reductionism which they saw in the work of all those proto-historians of ideas who could see in literature nothing but ideas in dilution (to take out of context, as it usually is, Professor Lovejoy's notorious pronouncement). To be sure, what myth is they cannot agree upon. At one extreme it is said simply to be unanalyzable esthetic quality, and is associated with primitive magic and mana; at another extreme it is said to be the reproduction in literature of a ritual pattern of archetypal significance for mankind. Its ground may be assumed, on the one hand, to be open to ultimate psychoanalytic exploration; or it may be frankly said, on the other, to be knowable only in relation to a fully accepted theism. Myth criticism in the literary branch of American studies has come from both of these diametrically opposed wings of the "school." Also, it has come from less committed scholars, who have adduced the concept to their work in order to recover for literature some of the vitality which it necessarily loses when it is treated analytically, as in the history of ideas. Insofar as literature projects ideas which have power over men, or through which men may have power, those ideas are said to be mythic—or rather, to be realizable as myths. What it is important for us to note here is that

we begin to have a sense of how literature, as literature, works in culture; specifically how it is related to the ideas in and through which we make our civilization and are made by it.

For the historian of ideas, Cooper, for example, was a writer committed to certain anachronistic, complex but petrified "Jeffersonian" ideas—ideas whose structure and meaning can be clearly recovered. In essence, they form one of the many protean blends of the nominally contradictory ideas of primitivism and of progress. In Cooper's America, as in Jefferson's, the blend seemed uniquely possible of achievement. High, genteel civilization could reach a finer, more innocent form by virtue especially of the sacrifice of those nobly inferior souls who were moving deeper and deeper into the primitive west, gentling it as they went, in order to make way for those who came from the progressive east. The easterners thus would always be not just touched, but informed, by the westerners' sacrifice. Here was not a natural, but a naturalized, aristocracy. We can understand Cooper's thought, can discover the existence of these mutually contradictory aspects, only if we subject it to such intellectual analysis as results in the kind of conclusions I have noted immediately above. Otherwise we might well be victimized by that thought, as of course Cooper was.

Now, this tells us a lot, makes us know the analyzable content of Cooper's thought. But we want to know also the quality of that thought, the form of its strength and its weakness; we want to know how it was, and what it meant and means, to be as committed to his thought as Cooper was. For the mythographic critic, if I may call him such, those ideas took their life from Cooper's sense, however imprecise his expression of it, of their vital relationship to a deep and paradoxical longing central to his society: on the one hand, for a freedom to do as one pleased, to make life over; and on the other hand, for a sort of discipline which

would establish order and civilization in the land once and forever. And we know those ideas not as reified abstractions, but as patterns of heroic behavior. Contemplating them, realizing them in the stories, we should assent to them; we should willingly suspend our disbelief, and know the possibility of living according to such ideas, whether we will or no. (How much we can do so—I think not very much—is a critical problem beside the point here.<sup>1</sup>) Having discovered and accounted for the content of Cooper's thought with the history of ideas, we comprehend their power through their mythic form. One step necessarily precedes the other. Or say: One step necessarily follows from the other. For, so it seems to me, the historical-critical methods deriving from the history of ideas and the study of myth are not mutually contradictory but rather complementary, part of the process of analysis and synthesis which makes possible new knowledge—and new forms of knowledge, new disciplines. And the direction in which this new knowledge moves is toward that "holistic" concept of the study of civilization which is the prerequisite of our establishing American Studies as a discipline. Indeed, when the two methods are made into one, as for example in the best work of Lionel Trilling, Henry Nash Smith, Charles Feidelson, and R. W. B. Lewis, they show us how literature can be seen projecting and shaping, deriving from and then renewing, the life of culture itself.

This sketch, however brief and foreshortened, of these two movements in the study of literature in general and of American literature in particular is intended to give a sense of what is happening in literary study to make things augur

<sup>1</sup> I have, however, discussed the problem in two essays: "The Leatherstocking Tales Re-examined," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XLVI (1947), and "Savagism and Civilization: The World of the Leatherstocking Tales," *English Institute Essays*, 1949 (New York, 1950), pp. 92-116.

well for American Studies, or for American Civilization. Much more could be said—particularly of work in *Geistesgeschichte* and stylistic criticism (which is now available in English translations of the work of Ernst Curtius, Erich Auerbach, and Américo Castro) and of the socio-cultural criticism of Kenneth Burke. But here I have deliberately confined myself to work of immediate relevance to American Studies, work of *immediate* relevance because it deals substantively with American literature.

We move slowly, but I think surely, toward a sense of how to treat of writers, whether neglected Longfellows or over-worked Melvilles, as members of their culture and ours. We begin, for example, to understand the peculiar and intrinsic significance of Longfellow's second- or third-rateness and its relation to Melville's first-rateness, all in the context of the culture which gave them life. We also begin to move toward an understanding of how to treat non-imaginative writers as much for the quality of their expression, what they meant in their culture, as for their factually verifiable content, what we can show to be their quota of "truth." We begin to move, in the words of Harry Levin's celebrated essay, toward an understanding of literature as an institution. And when we speak thus we find that, often without knowing it, we are at one with sociologists and anthropologists; for we are using—and misusing—their terminology and their concepts. We find that they use—and misuse—ours too: I think now particularly of Hugh Dalziel Duncan's recent *Language and Literature in Society*—an attempt to codify the system, if it can be called that, of Kenneth Burke for the use of sociologists. But sociologists who would use the system would willy-nilly become more than sociologists; they would find themselves near *some* critics. There is, that is to say, a common center—a shared concept of the study of civilization. When we arrive at that center, then we shall have our discipline.

### III

But we shall arrive at it only if we work from what we know, to what we would like to know; from the modes and methods by which we now get (or make) our knowledge of reality, to modes and methods yet to be established. I daresay that what is happening as regards the kind of literary study described above is happening also as regards study in other established disciplines. But it is all so new; and we are all so far from knowing much more than how our own disciplines seem to be relatable to others. As yet, none of us appears to have an inclusive, conspective, synthesizing method. One is in danger of reaching an impasse. How can we establish programs whose very nature assumes that such a method is not only possible and probable, but immediately at hand—or if not at hand, then, in effect, not needed for genuine disciplined education?

I can conclude only that the wisest thing for me (and now I drop even the pretense of the editorial *We*) to do is to attempt to educate students in American literature (which means English and other literatures too) and to encourage them, when they are advanced in their training, to try to make such interdisciplinary connections as the state of our knowledge will let them make. For, as a matter of fact, this is, so far as the available evidence shows, all that students, in American Studies programs or out, can and will do anyway. I should think that the historian, the teacher of fine arts, the economist, and the rest—that each would have an attitude analogous to mine. However eager we all might be to teach American Studies or American Civilization, as teachers we must remember that we earn the right to teach in a discipline only when we have thought creatively in its terms and forms; only when we have helped invent and clarify that special dialectic which gives it its status as a discipline; only when we have worked in it.

What if those terms and those forms,

that special dialectic, are not yet clearly established? What if the discipline isn't there to work in? Well, we strive to establish terms, forms, and discipline. This essay is meant to testify, for literary study at least, how we are so striving. Meantime, I take heart from a favoritehortatory

statement of mine—the prefatory note which John Eliot wrote in the seventeenth century to one of his translations for us Indians: "We must not sit still and look for miracles. Up and be doing; and the Lord will be with you!"

## Notes on Reading American Literature Abroad

RUTH N. MYERS

**W**HY DON'T Americans write nice, cheerful novels, plays and poems that reflect "the American way of life"? Why are current American novels full of insanity, violence, depravity, lust, and degradation when life in America is on the whole, if not sane and tame entirely, at least rather far from the distortions presented in American literature? The question which has often been asked by teachers and librarians making up reading lists and worrying about the effect of current literature on the young, has recently been raised again in *Life*, in the *Saturday Review*, in *Harper's*, and in *The New York Times Book Review*.

The cause of the present concern is now international. What will the rest of the world think of America if they judge us by what goes on in our novels, plays, and poems? How can the rest of the world trust and form alliance with or look for leadership from a nation such as we appear to be, not in the pages of unsympathetic visitors, but as we reveal ourselves in our own literature? *Life* says in effect that our literature may be bad for American prestige abroad and our writers ought to be more cheerful, more American, and above all concerned with the image of the United States in the eyes of the world.

One can imagine Mr. Dulles' embarrassment in the scene we are about to imagine. Mr. Dulles is standing on a brink before

the eyes of the world. He is about to arbitrate some delicate and crucial matter when there is a commotion, and the eyes of the world are focused on the noisy entrance of this confused troupe—Popeye, Maggie, Lonnie, Anna Christie, Sister Carrie, Blanche DuBois, Studs Lonigan, the characters from *Death of a Salesman*, *Winesburg, Ohio*, and *Tobacco Road*, who march around a prickly pear rattling a few dry bones. Babbitt gives every one a big smile and an American flag to wave while they all sing "America I love You," words by e e cummings. Quick fade-out as Nick Adams rushes on shouting, "Boys, I've made a separate peace."

For a number of years, first as a librarian and then as a teacher of undergraduate courses in Book Selection and in twentieth-century literature, I too have been concerned when the question of esthetic values in conflict with political values, or moral values, or religious values, or local values has raised its complex head—which was just about every day. In addition, on two occasions I have had the opportunity of reading American literature with foreign students, five years ago as a Fulbright teacher in Greece and this year as an exchange professor at Hiroshima University.

From this experience, I should like to agree in part with Robert Penn Warren's article, (*NYTBR*, 11 Dec. 1955), dis-

agree a little here and there, and try to indicate why the whole matter, much more complex than the length or purpose of Mr. Warren's article allowed him to indicate, is far from hopeless.

My first point is rather negative but important. Perhaps unfortunately, our writers do not have as much influence on foreign opinion as many believe, or wish, them to have. News from the U. S. as reported in the local papers, what other Asians say about us, the movies, our music, sports, comics, the radio, and especially the advertisements in any of our magazines and the pictures in *Life*, all have much greater influence than our literature, i.e., reach a wider and less sophisticated audience, and reach it emotionally and very quickly. What is reported as going on at a trial in Mississippi or on the Alabama campus has an immediate impact that makes that of *Native Son* or *Tobacco Road* seem practically nonexistent. Our music and sports are much admired and copied; our movies are popular but not understood. As one of my best students told me, "I do not understand the movies, but I go to learn the English and the strange love." Certainly, the picture of American life as pieced together by the Greek girls from the advertisements in our magazines was ridiculous and misleading; and if *Life* is really concerned about American prestige abroad, some of its own pictorial shenanigans might well give them pause.

My second point I do not expect to be believed, and I still find it very shocking. Many students do not know whether a writer is an American or an Englishman. Frequently the books in English in a school or college library are shelved together (there are always many more English authors and publications than American), the departments are called English language and literature, and the courses present English and American works together; so *Life* really has an international job on its hands and will have to talk our English cousins into presenting the

American way of life in the interest of American prestige abroad.

Moreover, many of the students do not have a clear idea of the period or date of any author. To a certain extent this is true of undergraduates in the United States, but the situation is further complicated abroad by translation dates or edition dates which the student accepts as the date of composition. Any recent gloom or glee is mixed and diluted by writers from the past who are mistaken for modern or current.

Actually, in some ways the older the literature, the easier and therefore the more popular it is with some students. The big, formal words and archaic expressions are rather well set forth in the dictionaries; the slang, the ellipses, the informal usage that so much of our current writing makes use of are not treated as well in the dictionaries and are practically impossible for the student to master. In addition, in Japan there is a feeling and veneration for antiquity—the older the writer the better. So many graduate students write theses on Chaucer, Spenser, or the minor Elizabethans. Of course, our modern literature may be read in translation, but I have reason to believe many of the translations are rather strange.

But enough of this. Let us suppose that our student can read, and that he knows his writer's nationality and date. His task is still difficult and the result is uncertain.

Mr. Warren tells a story of a young fascist officer who was converted to our side by reading American novels (Dreiser, Faulkner, Lewis) since it occurred to him that "if democracy could allow that kind of criticism of itself, it must be very strong and good."

I believe this story. It touches me and gives me hope. It also reminds me of some other stories which are also true. Five years ago the favorite reading of the average Greek girl in my class was *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and translations of any novel by Ouida or Jules Verne. With this group I was as-

signed to read the short stories in the Modern Library collection. The only story they liked was "The Apple Tree," but they liked it very much, and it comforts me now to think that they think kindly of some American literature because of that fine American writer, John Galsworthy. Of course, we read several Hemingway stories and on the final examination, one of many optional questions was to discuss violence in Hemingway. One answer went: a story by Hemingway is a work of art; a work of art can have no violence; therefore, there is no violence in a Hemingway story.

An Armenian student read *The Grapes of Wrath* and a report on the American Public Library, published by the ALA. Both distressed her deeply. I discovered that reality to her was always judged 20-50% worse than what was stated in any book, fiction or non-fiction. If ALA said that 42% of the people in the United States had inadequate library service, then contrary to her previous opinion, there must be practically no library service in America; and most of the U. S. must be starving with the Okies.

In Japan I have worked with young men and women, juniors and seniors in the university, and again I have read modern short stories. No matter what we read, many of the students find fate, destiny, and nihilism. They find fate, destiny, nihilism so frequently and often in such unlikely places that I find fate, destiny, and nihilism in the eye of the beholder. Fate, destiny, and nihilism are also found in the notes of the Japanese editions of American literature text-books, and it is very difficult to get a Japanese student to question the notes of a text-book.

So, I would not count too heavily on having a foreign student "find in it [American literature] a vital image of man, and some comment on his condition . . . some mark of freedom. . ." I would rather expect him to bring some critical formula, some personal experience, or some vague longing from the emotional

climate of his class or society to bear where they were irrelevant or misleading. I could only be certain that I could not tell in advance what his reaction would be.

Just consider for a moment how much of our literature is Christian and how much of it concerns romantic love. Neither has validity in Japan, which is Buddhist if anything, and where marriages are still arranged. In a conversation class we were talking about the movie "East of Eden" which every one had found confusing. Two or three knew who Adam was, but no one knew who Cain and Abel were. I am now used to American students' not knowing who Ahab was, but I still believe the undergraduate at home would know Cain and Abel. Certainly, no tag, no allusion, no echo of the King James Version gives meaning to what is read in Japan. Or consider the differences in poetic and dramatic form between Japanese and American literature—or rather don't, or we'll never get on with this. But the chances for error of fact, taste, experience, and judgment are great in reading any foreign literature and the differences between Occident and Orient multiply the hazards.

Nevertheless, several of the Greek girls knew what literature was about. Probably Mr. Warren's young Italian did; several of my Japanese students do too. Not many, but there are a few—probably about the same proportion anywhere—who have sensitivity and responsiveness, who can understand, can grasp the meaning of the whole story and experience it aesthetically. This is, I believe, partly a matter of temperament and partly a matter of training. I do not think it has anything to do with democracy, with being a Japanese, with being an American, with the color of one's skin or one's political beliefs, although I have tried to show how these may keep one from understanding literature.

Moreover, the critics are quite correct in saying that most current American litera-

ture is not American, does not reflect the American way or the American character. It is a great art nevertheless, and a Senate investigation is not yet in order. It is, I believe, the beginning of a new world literature, and the few good students are citizens of that world.

Art has always been involved in making the individual or specific become the general or universal. For a long time the individual or specific and the national were practically synonymous: Athens, Rome, Florence, Venice were local habitations which were also national. After some of the countries became unified and too big, the artists used various classes of society for a "home land," specializing in upper class, middle-class, the village, the cathedral towns, etc. Some later tried living in an ideological country, but the air was a bit dry and the soil not rich enough. The Irish have fared very well because their green island stayed small and individual.

The Americans, as transplanted Englishmen, Frenchmen, or whatever, at first fared rather badly as literary artists. It was partly as Cooper guessed that they needed a past, but even more they needed roots, perhaps a set of chains to dance in, certainly a feeling of belonging, of being at home. A hundred years ago we had a fine harvest, and then we began to have difficulty. Whitman was determined to be American and went around frantically clucking and calling the names of classes and masses, of rivers and mountains and towns, trying to get used to them, trying to make them his. Mark Twain took it a little more easily and succeeded in being the last great American writer; even he is sometimes called a local colorist. Henry James was intermittently very American, and it is logical that his characters in contact and conflict with European manners should be very much alive now that America is a world power and we are all so aware of the interplay of cultures. Of course, we have had writers who have written American books—i.e., have caught much of the American character in in-

dividual stories or books: Willa Cather several times, Thornton Wilder in *The Skin of Our Teeth* and partly in *Our Town*, Tennessee Williams in *Camino Real*, Ogden Nash. The examples may be a bit personal but the general idea is sound.

But after Mark Twain, no writers succeeded in being wholly American, because the country got too big and varied for any one heart to hold; and so we had a lot of local color writers, many of whom were very good. We have continued to have local-colorists who have become so very good indeed that they shoot right up to universal heights from the Mississippi mud and make no stop at a station called U. S. A. When any American other than a Southerner reads Faulkner, he reads him on a universal not a national level.

All of this has coincided with a double movement throughout the world involving intense nationalism and internationalism. Seventy-seven countries are now in the U. N., many of them new and small. They will be producing national literature before too long.

For better or worse, American art seems to have moved beyond this. To be sure, there is something very real that can be called "The American Character." It exists in the pages of the sociologists and to varying degrees in each American. For your amusement here is "The American Character" as recently compiled by one of my classes after they had been pushed unmercifully to go beyond "big and rich." None of it comes from the stories they had been studying. Some of them had read Commager and Mead; they did not know about Riesman. The American is good-natured, generous, gregarious, anti-authoritarian, "democratic and equalitarian by conviction if not by practice," hard-working, lucky, more intelligent than he seems, intensely practical and pragmatic, materialistic, ingenious, experimental, impatient, too honest, naive, unfamiliar with evil and fear (at least the Oriental versions of these), often informal or vulgar

(this was not defined or discussed); his thinking is quantitative, his social consciousness is highly developed, but he is too individualistic and self-confident; he is humanitarian rather than religious (some thought him too religious); he is sure he is right; and above all he is optimistic.

The chief trouble with this list is that the generalizing has already been done. It may indicate something about national character, but it is certainly not art, even if you were to dress it in gray flannel or

if you give it the glamor of Hollywood.

The virtue of literature is not that it is national or shows national character but that it does say something vital about the human situation in a way that gives pleasure. Much American literature, both old and new, does this. One may read it at home or abroad with pride. It's going to be all right, *Life* and *The New York Times Book Review*. It's going to be all right. Don't worry so. It's un-American.

## Whitman's Structural Principles in "Spontaneous Me"

HARRY R. WARFEL

**I**N THE 1856 edition of *Leaves of Grass* Walt Whitman perfected the new style of poetry that he had somewhat tentatively and anonymously brought into being a year earlier. The break with traditional verse patterning in 1855 involved new manipulations of sounds and rhythms, new sentence arrangements, new maneuverings of imagery, and wholly new art forms. This revolutionary rejection of three-thousand-year-old poetic structuring was accomplished in a context of new subject-matter based upon a sensory-perception psychology and a transcendental philosophy. If it is true that the great artist renews his art in one or more aspects, Whitman may be said to have renovated the art of poetry at all points. By 1856 he perfected his work in all its technical details. This is not to say that every new poem "came off" successfully; what occurred was that his mastery of a new method became as absolute as did that of any other poet—say Browning—who took a new direction.

The radical difference between Whitman and his predecessors has obscured the essential patterning unity of his innovations. Any work of art, though com-

posed of separable parts, is a single construct. Although distinct analyses may be made of subject, theme, mood, tone, sounds, vocabulary, sentence structure, imagery, art form, rhetoric, logic, esthetics, philosophical contexts, psychological insights, literary sources, autobiographical content, and social meanings, a critic must view a poem as a totality and extract its meaning and formulate value judgments upon the whole composition. Clues to the artist's intentions and methods often come from a juxtaposition of a single composition with his other works, from his comments upon his chosen medium, from his intellectual directions, his emotional state, his physiological tone, his personality, and from his social arrangements or living conditions. More clearly, possibly, than any earlier poet Whitman infused a whole self in all its ramifications and with its full configuration into his best poems. Of course, not all of this identity, as Whitman termed the immeasurable fullness of a single person, can be included in a single poem. Not "Song of Myself" nor even *Leaves of Grass* contains every ray of relationship possible in any human being. Yet only by

viewing Whitman's best poems as unified portions of an intended cosmic gestalt can their full intent be understood.

The artistic methods of Whitman—in relation to the totality mentioned above—emerge clearly in "Spontaneous Me," a poem first printed in 1856; this poem, except for minor additions intensifying its original meaning, remained essentially unchanged through succeeding editions of *Leaves of Grass*. The subject is procreation. The theme is the spontaneity, necessity, naturalness, purity, and lawfulness of the procreative act. A mood of serious joyfulness akin to ecstasy is conveyed in a dignified conversational tone. The sounds—the varied pitches, stresses, and junctures or pauses—pattern subtly with assonance, alliteration, and repetition to support—as they differentiate—each unit of utterance and of thought. The rhythms shift from a slow movement in the first line—where two iambs (the first close to a spondee) are followed after an appositional pause by a trochee—to a lilting duple-triple iambic-anapestic movement that escapes Longfellow-like singsong by deliberate stress changes like, in line 3, "the arm of my friend hanging idly" and like, in line 7, "Beautiful dripping fragments." These clearly designed aural effects indicate that Whitman's poems must be read aloud; when they are so read their dependence upon the intonation patterns of speech is unmistakable. Indeed, the eye is misled by the appearance of *the*—the unstressed determiner or definite article—as the first word in 35 of the poem's 45 lines. The eye sees monotony; the ear hears variety and melodic harmony in all the complexity of Bach-like music.

No gaucheries of vocabulary—no foreign words, no neologisms, no coinages—direct attention to themselves. Unusual words and common idiomatic expressions, it is true, chime together, as in "phallic thumb of love" and "The sensitive, orbic, underlapp'd brothers"; these metaphors for the penis and testicles gain precision from *phallic* and *orbic*; in drawing upon

the full resources of the dictionary for Greek and Latin epithets to accompany Old English *thumb* and *underlapp'd*, Whitman was following the example of Shakespeare in attaining a clear, condensed, and vivid image. It must be remembered that vocabulary, though graded by levels for lexicographical purposes, does not in itself in its functioning in human utterance exist in the human brain on levels. Utterances call into use the available supply. The validity of any word may be questioned for any one of many reasons, but if it does its job successfully there can be no complaint about it. These metaphors point up the wide range of Whitman's vocabulary and the dozens of happy, original word-combinations that form new percepts or concepts in relation to a subject as old as human life.

Whitman's break with tradition appears most clearly in his syntax. "Spontaneous Me" contains 43 lines of word-groups with nouns as headwords; one line, line 11, has a verb-headword, *Know*; and the last line has two statement-sentences, the second of which, a metaphor, is in apposition with the first. Line 11, a command-sentence, is the single alteration in the basic syntactical patterning in the body of the poem. The final line, which resolves the mood and the syntax, unites in the pronoun *it* the whole poem. The first *it* has as its immediate antecedent the word *bunch*, which metaphorically includes all the preceding word-groups, for the disparate units of experience unite as a "bunch" or cluster or sequence at whose culminating moment an end is reached. The noun-headwords pattern in various ways: some nouns stand alone, some have premodifying or postmodifying elements, and some have both. The modifiers of noun-headwords vary in number and syntax: prepositional phrases and *that* clauses are frequent; verbals are used as pre- and post-modifying elements; and compounding is recurrent. Despite the seeming repetition of the noun-headword word-group, the syntactical resources of the

working units of the language are represented within this poem. Only the question-sentence, used frequently in other poems in the 1856 edition, is obviously missing. Not to be overlooked, therefore, is Whitman's dexterity in exploiting the whole range of syntactical structures of the English language. The skillful handling of sounds and words is matched by a similar adroitness in grammar.

"Spontaneous Me" gives a clue to its overall structural principle in line 8: "What we call poems being merely pictures." What looks like a catalogue must be viewed as a succession of pictures that follow in chronological sequence from morning to night, from "the mounting sun" through "soft forenoon airs" to "deep at night." Line 9, part of a parenthesis, in "the privacy of the night" foreshadows the climax and does not interrupt the order of events. The pictures, which intermingle, are of two kinds: of nature and of man. The "me" of the poem is Nature, the "I" which in the final line carelessly tosses aside the whole experience in terms of the theme. Whitman speaks not in *propria persona* nor as a generic human being; here is the voice of "Nature without check with original energy" ("Song of Myself," line 13). The pictures, consequently, have a wide-ranging yet focused quality appropriate to the universality of the speaker or central intelligence from whose point of view the theme is being developed. Here is no "negligent list of one after another as I happen to call them to me or think of them"; actually the sequence is adeptly chosen and arranged.

The pictorial method in verbal art took a new turn in Whitman's poems. Older poetry was essentially expository. The poet announced a topic, such as "Of arms and the man I sing," "Of man's first disobedience," and "The world is too much with us." Sometimes the topic sentence was stated figuratively, as with "My love is a red, red rose" and "I wandered lonely as a cloud." Whatever

pictures such a poem contains are illustrative of the announced topic. Some poems present an obviously allegorical picture; in nearly all instances the central image operates within assigned limits, as in metaphysical poetry, and the details elaborate items organically related to this central image. Whitman followed this traditional procedure in "O Captain! My Captain!" Elsewhere, except in very short poems, he employed a method of free association by bringing a great variety of images of similar import to bear upon his themes. This piling-up of names, things, and actions into so-called catalogues loses esthetic value to the degree that the list, if "negligent" or overextended, lacks symbolic force. When each item, as in "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," carries full weight as a symbol or operates to validate a larger symbolic maneuvering, the pictorial method has as satisfying an effectiveness and validity, though with more esthetic pleasure, as that gained from turning the pages of an integrated album. This means that Whitman's poems are not to be read as one word or one line after another but as a succession of related pictures with a unifying framework. Much music must be so heard; Debussy's "L'apres-midi d'un faun" needs to be remembered in its totality and its parts, for the methods of Whitman and Debussy were analogous.

The pictures or images in "Spontaneous Me" begin in line 2 with a paralleling of "The loving day, the mounting sun" with "The friend I am happy with"; they introduce the theme of love at the initial stage of friendship. The "hillside" gives a vista of nature's bounteous productivity and subtly suggests in "The private untrimmed bank" the concept of unfulfillment, even as it prepares for "The privacy of the night." "Primitive apples, the pebble-stones, Beautiful dripping fragments" looks forward to line 25, and now it is clear that "mounting" in line 2 bears a level of meaning related to the theme.

These frankly sexual images are given universality in a parenthesis defining the quality of "real poems." The human need and act, which Nature calls "chaste" or lawful, parallel the conduct of the wild-bee.

This basis in nature for the procreative act is followed by pictures of two sleepers entwined in bed. The boy's dream emission is imaged in the dead leaf's fall and "The no-form'd stings." His need and torment, universalized in line 30, leads to the couple's union, but at its consummation he is "all color'd, red, ashamed, angry." Nature gives a contrasting view of the ethical status of the act: "The souse upon me of my lover the sea, as I lie willing and naked." Further, Nature pictures forms of fulfillment through twin babies at play while their vigilant mother watches; this image is followed by one relating to the husks which show ripening or ripened walnuts. Fulfillment is deemed continent, honorable, decent, chaste—all is part of Nature's oath of procreation. Once the act has been completed, the experience may be dismissed without further concern: "It has done its work." Within these larger pictures there are many details whose imagery serves like pigments to give the proper shading and depth. At times a word, a word-group, or even several lines operate as an image or picture; punctuation and line organization supply few helps in defining the span of words presenting an image. To isolate each one, the reader cannot depend on printer's devices or on syntax; the chief resource is an ear attuned to the intonational patterns of English speech.

A new art form has resulted from Whitman's manipulation of sounds, syntax, and imagery. The easiest term to use is impressionism, for in its parts and its totality the poem results from the methods similar to those of impressionistic painters and musical composers. But though Whitman uses sounds with great effectiveness, he does not merely repeat repetends or refrains to establish themes. Nor like the

painter (whom Stephen Crane paralleled so well) does he use identical colors or geometrical designs to provide the dynamics of his expression. Rather, he plays with free substitution of similar or contrasting data (or images), setting item against item in such a way that the words themselves present patterns of sound, syntax, image, and meaning to arouse the reader's emotions and intellect. This interweaving of all the qualities of language in a single composition, especially as they relate to their full evocative potential, gives Whitman high stature as a creator of new art forms within the area generally called impressionism.

The rhetorical principles implicit in "Spontaneous Me" now can be analyzed. The organization is dual (as it is in most of Whitman's poems): there is a sequence of ideas, and there is a sequence in time (as was pointed out earlier). The first line announces the concept of spontaneous nature, the second line moves to limit this concept to love, and, though given a clue in "mounting," the further limitation to the sex act as one manifestation of nature's spontaneous love emerges in a succession of images which culminate in line 13. "Earth of chaste love" in line 14 acts as a pedal point to hold together the lovers' experiences through line 34, and then in line 35 a similar pedal point enlarges from the single tone of chastity (reiterated twice in line 40) to a harmonious chord: continence, highmindedness or honor and decency (through verbal and tonal antonyms), chastity, duty ("oath"), and fulfilment. Then the finale, beginning at line 43, in a quick staccato resolves the emotion and concludes the experience with concepts of relief, repose, and contentment. The final statements in the last line dismiss the whole experience as necessary and—in relation to the cosmic order—as commonplace as the fall of the blossoms in line 4 or of "The dead leaf . . . falling" in line 22. The musical analogy here employed, as well as the repeated use of

pictures of falling (petals, leaf, bunch), reveals the intricate artistry of the poem. The ideas flow in and through pictures; topic sentences are omitted. Further rhetorical principles can be deduced from Whitman's word choice and arrangements as they produce satisfying combinations leading to a unified whole. Without giving further examples, it is possible to say that "Spontaneous Me" meets successfully all the stylistic and rhetorical tests applied to original poetic composition.

The logic of art is not the logic of mathematics or of commonsense. Each art—each artist—moves in terms of the materials to be employed. Language, the literary artist's malleable medium, derives its sounds, words, and syntactical structures from his speech-community. Inherent in the language is a way of examining life. The English verb, like its cousins in other Indo-European languages, expresses time relationships not found in Chinese. Whitman, however, deviates from standard sentence patterns and here makes a minimum use of verbs. Time appears almost static in "Spontaneous Me"; a few adjectives ("late in autumn"; "forenoon airs"), adverbs ("at night"), and nouns ("day," "night") carry the burden of the time sequence of the poem. Inside some of the images are occasional verbs of time ("till I saturate what shall produce boys to fill my place"), but they are local in reference. The verbals, both present and past, have essentially a present meaning in their adjectival positions. Whitman's method consequently has inherent in it something akin to pictographic writing; the logic of such a code is quite different from that of Standard English. Whitman's language, though English in all its essentials, serves as a vehicle for a transcendental philosophy whose logical bases vary from standard views as much as his syntax differs from standard English writing. Whitman accepts time, but, paradoxically, for him all time culminates in the present moment. In accord with his erasure of time he places his major

data in a present-time context, but he still gives past-present-future indications within individual images. A sense of immediacy, for the reader of 1855 as of 1955 or 2055, beats through the poems. The enchanting spell of Whitman's lines doubtless is reinforced by this pictographic method of eliminating or suppressing time. Theme thus takes precedence over chronology, idea over narrative, and the universal everywhere lies behind a particular fact. The logic of timeless pictures arranged in sequence was as new—and as seemingly unintelligible—as placeless geometrical figures in early Cubist painting.

Unlike the Cubists, Whitman rooted his esthetics, philosophy, and politics on a foundation of transcendental religion. Universal laws flowing through nature revealed the divinely appointed duties and possibilities of each person. Equality and liberty were his heritage as a citizen; a clean body untainted by concepts of inherited depravity was his at birth. As a child of nature he shared with all other living things certain responsibilities to himself, to his fellow men, to nature, and to God. The great poet's task, thought Whitman, was to prepare poems which would restore human kind to its heritage. For a while Walt dreamed of describing archetypal American democratic characters who might serve as models. He was not a narrative or biographical artist; wisely he gave over the task. He limited himself to statements of principles. As far as he could, he put into his poems every idea appropriate to his purpose. His moral and ethical aims suffered no curtailment. If man is as large as nature, a poem must be as large as man. Everything in human experience must belong in poetry. And despite Emerson's plea to remove the poems of physiology, Whitman could not erase a line from *Leaves of Grass* without destroying his very reason for writing the book.

Thus "Spontaneous Me" and similar poems suffer discredit on the ground that the subject is tabu in polite society. It is

not necessary here to review the reasons why the poem has been attacked by esthetic and moral critics. Nor need the social and philosophical contexts of the poem be examined. If we can look at the poem purely as a work of art, as a literary construct, it will shed much light upon Whitman's method of developing his themes and possibly will explain why the same themes recur in other poems. Where Browning, Hardy, and Robinson narrated moments in the lives of many different real or imagined people to illustrate a few themes, Whitman expanded his themes in

pictographs, in symbols all so different and yet all so alike in resonance and refraction that it becomes a feat of memory to keep one poem separate from another. If ease in recalling poetry is a test of its greatness, then Whitman succeeded only occasionally. But if the test of a poem is the successful maneuvering of sound, syntax, and symbol into a new art form by which a usable idea moves on the wings of emotion, then Whitman succeeded often, even as he did in "Spontaneous Me."

## Two Worlds: Maxwell Anderson's *Winterset*

ROBERT C. ROBY

FOR SOME YEARS Maxwell Anderson's *F* *Winterset* has provided drama anthologies with an example of poetic tragedy. The usual accompanying references to Anderson's originality, imagination, and capacity to achieve intensity of emotion and statement, while they admit the heavy Shakespearean influence, leave unexplored questions of the playwright's ability to turn the borrowed materials to his own use and integrate the varied elements in a pattern consistent with the play's explicit thought and emotion. Analysis of meaning, plot, and language in *Winterset* demonstrates Anderson's failure in both these attempts. Instead of creating in his play a world suitable for the affirmation of values which he espouses, Anderson tries to make the best of two worlds. The result is a number of unresolved contradictions and unassimilated literary gleanings.

### I

In conception *Winterset* is anti-scientific and anti-materialistic. The Shakespearean

elements recall a time when, in the drama at least, the individual had more dignity, his passions more importance, his sufferings more meaning. The contemporary materials attempt to emphasize non-materialistic, non-mechanistic aspects of human life. In addition, Anderson's critical essays,<sup>1</sup> which furnish a background for many of the ideas and attitudes in *Winterset*, contain considerable comment on his concern with the contemporary dilemma which Joseph Wood Krutch has called "disillusion with the laboratory." With many of his contemporaries, Anderson once saw in scientific determinism man's new hope for salvation through

<sup>1</sup> Collected in *Off Broadway* (1947). Especially pertinent here are those entitled "Whatever Hope We Have," "Off Broadway," "The Uses of Poetry," and "Poetry in the Theatre." The last named appeared as a preface to the published version of *Winterset*. Although post-dating *Winterset* by from one to eleven years, these essays present retrospectively the formation of Anderson's ideas, and show a high degree of consistency among themselves and with tendencies in the play.

laboratory experiment. When it appeared that science, in attending only to those characteristics of man not specifically human, added to the confusion of the human situation, Anderson adopted a philosophic position in reaction to it. Through a peculiar anti-scientific pragmatism, he rejected the scientific view as impractical: "without a core of belief neither man nor nation has courage to go on. . . . Mere rationalism is mere death. Mere scientific advance without purpose is an advance toward the waterless mirage and the cosmic scavengers." In this vague and insecure neo-humanism, belief in man's worth and nobility is illogical, but necessary for human survival.

For Anderson, therefore, the purpose of art is to concern itself with ultimate values and absolute truths in order to lend assurance to neo-humanism. His dissatisfaction with the scientific mode of thought extended to the problem play and the general limitations of realism. Concluding that the theatre's primary function has always been religious, while himself accepting only neo-humanism, Anderson has redefined that function as "the exaltation of the spirit of man." Consequently, tragedy is concerned with the aspirations and sufferings of a hero representative of that spirit. The good and evil of his inner conflict must be assumed as real values if tragedy is to have meaning. Poetic language is deemed proper because Anderson feels that it is by nature visionary and prophetic.

Anderson does not, however, reject science completely. While regretting the limitations of applied science, he finds indications of a high destiny for man in "the discoveries of pure science, itself an art, as it pushes away the veils of fact to reveal new powers, new mysteries, new goals for the eternal dream." Thus, to allay his fear of science Anderson would make scientists artists. Nevertheless, the "pure science" which he elevates to an art is engaged in the pursuit of scientific knowledge for its own sake; purposive

knowledge may emerge incidentally, but there is no assurance that such will be the case. The "eternal dream" is, of course, completely unscientific. Anderson falls into this confusion through his desire to reconcile art and science; his attempt to draw a rigid distinction in kind between pure and applied science betrays the hope that perhaps science will discover that science has been wrong. It also allows him to oppose science on the utilitarian level while flirting with it in its romantic upper reaches.

These conflicts of art and science, of absolute and relative values, underlie *Winterset*, affecting its action, coloring its diction, and finally undermining its meaning.

## II

The plot of *Winterset* is largely a pastiche of various actions and characters from Shakespeare in a setting of typical problem-play materials.<sup>3</sup> An immigrant fish-peddler and political radical has been wrongfully executed for the murder of a guard in a payroll robbery; his son Mio is seeking new evidence so that he can place blame for the crime and thus avenge his innocent father's death, which he sees as a form of political murder. The influence of *Hamlet* is strongly suggested by the action as it is by the character of the brooding, introspective hero, his relatively stable and fortunate confidante Carr, and the return from the grave of the accusing Shadow. In his search Mio comes to the dwelling of Garth Esdras, a key witness who did not appear at the trial. Here he encounters Garth's sister Miriamne, and, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, descendants of hostile families experience love at first sight.

Trock Estrella, the gang leader guilty of the murder, also appears at the Esdras hovel, bent on insuring his own safety. There follows a semi-melodramatic psychological fencing between the two re-

<sup>3</sup> Most of these are summarized in Moody E. Prior, *The Language of Tragedy* (1947).

miniscent of the cat-and-mouse of Hamlet and Claudius. Another visitor is Judge Gaunt, who presided at the trial. Seeking self-justification, he meditates through various degrees of madness; the hobo who wanders in plays Mad Tom to his Lear. Also as in *King Lear*, a mock trial is held. During this trial Trock betrays his guilt, and Mio has achieved the certainty he has been seeking.

At this point Mio's hate, which motivates his revenge mission, comes into conflict with his love: bringing Trock to justice would involve Miriamne's brother also. The dilemma is Anderson's as well as Mio's; the playwright's problem is that of a revenge play which must reach its resolution not in the accomplishment of revenge but in wilful forbearance of it. This provides an interesting contrast with *Romeo and Juliet* as well: Shakespeare's dramatic problem lay in involving Romeo in a family feud from which he wished to remain aloof; Anderson's is in separating Mio from a quarrel which he has striven to keep alive. Shakespeare's answer came in Mercutio's duel with Tybalt which involved Romeo's loyalty. In Anderson's play, however, the conflict between love and loyalty allows no simple resolution; his ethic cannot be assumed, as was Shakespeare's, but must be presented through adequate exposition. Consequently, the resolution comes piecemeal, with a lack of coordination of thought and feeling. Mio reluctantly forgoes his advantage because he realizes that Miriamne wishes it; only after the opportunity for revenge has passed does she point out to him that his loyalty to his father, who loved mankind, has taken the perverted form of hate. This is resolution by rationalization; Mio has been a coward by instinct.

By the time that he has achieved self-knowledge, escape from Trock is impossible. Mio is killed attempting to flee, and Miriamne joins him in death to prove that she has not betrayed him. It remains only for Old Esdras to speak their elegy. His

long speech closing the play commends the nobility of dying for love, particularly on the part of the unsullied young, and generalizes on the value of defeat without submission.

Nevertheless, Mio's death has come adventitiously, and therefore the sentiments of the speech are directly applicable only to Miriamne. Mio dies not gloriously, but like a trapped animal. Because of the nature of the dilemma presented him, defiance of external forces in the play has been precluded by his acceptance of his father's spirit of forgiveness and consequent rejection of the revenge motif. Forgiveness and love have no perceptible effect beyond that on the two lovers; no feuding families are reconciled. In the interest of a mysterious higher truth, simple justice and right are forgotten; Trock and his gunmen emerge unscathed, and Judge Gaunt is removed by friendly police. The plot seems to be trying to say that emotion is superior to reason, but it presents no convincing argument to this effect. Love is portrayed as better than hate, but in the play a just and purposeful hate bows to an impotent love which can lead only to defeat. Aspiration is championed as noble, but its goal remains vague and incommunicable.

### III

The same contradiction of design and accomplishment is reflected in the play's imagery. Figures of light and darkness are dominant in *Winterset*; like the plot elements already noted, they are in large measure drawn from *Romeo and Juliet*. However, where Shakespeare used certain images with reference to traditional ideas and poetic associations, Anderson, in appropriating them, has not only been unable to preserve intact their conventional force and implications, but has used them in conjunction with other images drawn from areas to which the traditional ones are alien. The result is a dichotomy of thought and feeling damaging to his play.

The imagery of light and darkness

central to the structure and themes of *Romeo and Juliet* has been thoroughly investigated.<sup>8</sup> Structurally, these images are connected with the young lovers' brief, hectic infatuation, which is set against a background of family hatred. Early in the play, the predominant effect is of brilliant light against a dark background. Important figures in this connection are the sun and stars, but others—lightning, fire, and gun-powder—are also introduced, presaging the tragic outcome by suggestions of violence. This line of development, with light friendly to the lovers, reaches its climax in the balcony scene; from this point there is a reversal in the associations of light and darkness, culminating in the chamber scene. Subsequently the light and dark imagery virtually disappears until it is reintroduced in the scene in the Capulets' tomb, where it again achieves a vivid impression of light against a dark background and marks the affirmation of the strength and value of the central characters' love.

Associations introduced by these images are likewise important. Figures of the heavenly bodies suggest fate affecting the "star-crossed lovers." Those of sudden, brilliant light suggest the nature of their emotion, as brief as it is brilliant. Star images also carry implications of the loftiness of aspiration involved in Renaissance romantic love; in this connection love is also associated with religion. Consequently, in the final scene images from the stars and death are combined with those of love and marriage, suggesting that this fate marks not the defeat of love but its fulfillment.

The light and dark imagery in *Winterset* lacks both organic function and emotional force. With several exceptions, it

emerges as a loosely scattered set of vaguely suggestive figures, with little relationship to the play's structure. Images introduced in the spirit of Elizabethan certitude bog down in the morass of problem-play ambiguities. Moreover, there is a notable disparity in the relative force of various images, some of which attempt to recall the richness of Renaissance romantic love while others play upon a contemporary realism which undermines this impression.

Figures of darkness predominate, in the early stages of *Winterset*, establishing mood and setting. An atmosphere of gloom pervades the brief opening scene. This general melancholy is intensified for the Esdras family by the specific threat which menaces them. Miriamne is troubled by her father's fear: "When a shadow falls / across the page he waits for a blow to follow / after the shadow." Gradually figures of darkness are linked with more definite associations. Death is described as "blind darkness"; Mio's hate is "the black whirling inside me"; his adverse fate is a "black wind."

References to light characterize the good in life, which exists for the most part only as an ideal. At times light is introduced through images of street lamps and lighted windows, contrasting with the darkened, dead-end street in which the action is set and indicating human warmth and love in a society to which the protagonist is alien.

*Mio.* I'm alone, that's why. You see those lights,  
along the river, cutting across the rain—?  
those are the hearths of Brooklyn, and up  
this way  
the love-nests of Manhattan—they turn  
their points  
like knives against me. . . .

Here the realistic detail obstructs the imagery's intended function; a world in which Brooklyn's fires and Manhattan's boudoirs represent the height of human felicity is a questionable theatre for high tragedy.

Through the love which she awakens

<sup>8</sup>Caroline Spurgeon, *Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us* (1935), classifies the play's iterative imagery. W. H. Clemen, *The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery* (1951), treats the play's position in reflecting Shakespeare's progressive mastery in the use of imagery. Prior, *op. cit.*, points out that the imagery alters in a dynamic association with the action.

in him, Miriamne comes to represent warmth for Mio, and in this connection religious figures are abruptly introduced, evidently to suggest an approaching conflict between this love and Mio's hate.

*Mio.* Why girl, the transfiguration on the mount

was nothing to your face. It lights from within—

a white chalice holding fire, a flower in flame,

this is your face.

*Miriamne.* And you shall drink the flame and never lessen it. And round your head the aureole shall burn that burns there now, forever.

Light is also associated with truth. Since for Mio truth is identified with his father's vindication, images of light, often against a dark background, characterize his devotion to his father's memory, suggesting that this alone relieves his gloom: "I tell you I've lived / by his innocence, lived to see it flash / and blind them all." The violence of thought and emotion which marks Mio's search for truth in the play is suggested most frequently by fire images of this sort, which seek to indicate an element of purgation through destruction implicit in Mio's initial mission and presumably in the final resolution. Unlike Old Esdras and Garth, Mio supposedly is too strongly affected by the burning desire for truth to compromise with life's realities.

Will you tell me how a man's  
to live, and face his life, if he can't believe  
that truth's like a fire,  
and will burn through and be seen  
though it takes all the years there are?  
While I stand up and have breath in my lungs  
I shall be one flame of that fire;  
it's all the life I have.

The difficulty is that on grounds of plain common sense and simple human morality, love and truth are here incompatible. Consequently, the fire imagery and the devotion to truth associated with it are dropped for problem-play subtleties of a political and philosophical nature.

These problems, mainly ethical, are

usually implied or expressed in terms of black and white. However, their complexity is such that such terms fail to define adequately the relationship of right and wrong, justice and injustice. Mio's elaborate chess conceit is an example of this.

Now I have to find a way out. It's like a chess game. If you think long enough there's always a way out.—For one or the other.—I wonder why white always wins and black always loses in the problems. White to move and mate in three moves. But what if white were to lose—ah, what then? Why, in that case, obviously black would be white and white would be black.—As it often is.—As we often are.—Might makes white. Losers turn black.

This highly intellectualized figure suggests that Mio's problem is not the physical difficulty of eluding Trock and his gunmen so much as the dilemma of what to do with the information for which he has searched so long, only to find that it conflicts with his new outlook. The simplifications of commonplace morality—the black and white of the problems—are of no help here, for the "white" in the play is not only the truth about the murder; it is also Mio's love for Miriamne. "Black" is death and injustice, with Trock the agent of both. The nature of Mio's answer is foreshadowed by the ambiguity of the word "mate," which applies to his relationship to Miriamne in one way as to that with Trock in another. Mio's problem, like the play, ends in stalemate.

The imagery is further manipulated in the resolution. After Mio's decision images of sky and stars appear with increased frequency. The lovers signalize their feelings in terms of light, and Mio speaks of the past as a time of darkness.

*Miriamne.* Because to me  
you are all the hope and beauty and bright-  
ness drawn

across what's black and mean!

*Mio.* . . . I've groped long enough  
through this everglades of old revenges—

. . . I came here seeking  
light in darkness, running from the day,  
and stumbled on a morning.

In the brief interval between this and the death scene is interposed an abrupt, temporary reversal of the dominant imagery to that of darkness. Mio speaks of hell, twice addresses Miriamne as Persephone, and prays bitterly to "all you silent powers / that make the sleet and dark, and never yet / have spoken." As Miriamne points out, his bitterness marks a reversion in Mio's feelings; he later declares acceptance of life and love when, dying, he returns to the use of light images: "Tomorrow, I shall still love you, as I've loved / the stars I'll never see, and all the mornings / that might have been yours and mine."

This line of development of light and dark imagery attempts to make use of associations which might be called traditionally poetic. However, their meaning subsists in vague recollections of a past literary order; they do not sustain or adhere to any tradition self-contained in the play. For example the religious images—the chalice and the transfiguration on the mount—are isolated allusions less appropriate to this world than to that of *Romeo and Juliet*. Still other images insist on injecting realistic detail from the more superficial aspects of life in connection with the same associations—the electric lights of Manhattan, the flickering light of the motion-picture projector—furnishing a curious contrast to such figures as sun, stars, and lightning and detracting from their force.

Moreover, the play contains another set of associations in this imagery which conflicts with that which Anderson would, for purposes of the drama, have us accept. These associations, drawn from contemporary science, introduce a universe with which the traditional symbols are inconsistent.

Images from current science and technology occur mainly in the dialogue of Mio, emerging most prominently in figures of heavenly bodies. They range from such simple statements as that reflecting a Copernican universe—"My body turns /

as if you were the sun, and warm"—to his more complex analysis based on astronomical theories of the earth's origin and the sun's energy: "This earth / came tumbling down from chaos, fire, and rock / and bred up worms. . ." These worms will persist, Mio says,

till the sun cools down to the stabler molecules,  
yes, till men spin their tent-worm webs to  
the stars  
and what they think is done, even in the  
thinking,  
and they are gods, and immortal, and  
constellations  
turn for them all like mill wheels . . .

This belief that the mechanists will inherit the earth is stated before Mio's conversion, but the effect of scientific allusion here, as frequently in the play, is that of dwarfing the world and its inhabitants. Even after Mio's outlook has changed, his obsession with the mechanistic aspects of life and death reflects the bleakness of both. "Suppose one," he speculates, "held

a flashlight with the batteries run down  
till the bulb was dim, and knew that he  
could live  
while the glow lasted. . .  
Then to lie and turn  
with the earth and sun, and regard them  
not in the least  
when the bulb was extinguished. . .

The result is a strong desire in Mio and Miriamne to escape not only the limitations of earth, but its conditions as well. Miriamne believes that "in all the unwanted places and waste lands / that roll up into the darkness out of the sun / and into sun out of dark, there should be one empty / for you and me." Mio could breathe, he says, on the other planets, "but not here now. Not on this ball of mud." And he fancifully makes a date to meet Miriamne "When it rains, some spring / on the planet Mercury, where the spring comes often. . ."

A preoccupation with current scientific

explanations of natural phenomena permeates the play. Shadow speaks ironically of "science and penology"; Mio talks of the dissection and chemical dissolution of his father's body, and of "autopsies conducted in approved scientific fashion"; Gaunt alludes to "this delicate ganglion that is the brain." Love is associated with Freudian psychology, and Mio gives life a scientific explanation: "It's purely mechanical, like an electric appliance."

This scientifically grounded pessimism is not merely a temporary result of Mio's bitterness; it emerges most significantly in Old Esdras' final commentary on the action:

On this star,  
in this hard star-adventure, knowing not  
what the fires mean to right and left, nor  
whether  
a meaning was intended or presumed,  
man can stand up, and look out blind, and  
say:

in all these turning lights I find no clue,  
only a masterless night, and in my blood  
no certain answer, yet is my mind my own,  
yet is my heart a cry toward something dim  
in distance, which is higher than I am  
and makes me emperor of the endless dark  
even in seeking!

This reintroduction of the light and dark imagery inadvertently reasserts several ideas which the play has been designed to overcome: man's essential blindness, his uncertainty in emotion and desolation in thought, the unresolved conflict between the two, and the dimness of whatever hope we have. Explicitly the passage attempts to establish the importance of aspiration and defiance, but the peculiar nature of the star imagery, which is understandable only in terms of modern astronomy, defeats that purpose.

The inescapable contrast is Romeo's "Then I defy you, stars." Shakespeare's images, which are consistent with the world of his play, were capable of great imaginative and emotional force because their associations with devotion, aspiration, and destiny were natural to a

Medieval-Renaissance conception of cosmic order. Justice, love, and loyalty were not faltering or tentative values. Man and nature, although they could and did come into conflict, were parts of an accepted universal plan which heightened the importance and dignity of individual human actions.

In *Winterset*, rather than functioning as symbols of aspiration and exaltation, the stars betray confusion and disillusionment. Borrowing verbal effects from *Romeo and Juliet*, Anderson ignores the significance of the original context and attempts to combine Shakespeare's imagery with current scientific concepts without establishing a relationship between the two. In the view of the universe which he accepts, man is of considerably diminished importance. Planets are not so distant but that perhaps they may some day be visited, stars not so mysterious but that they can be described in scientific terms; moreover, they are notoriously aloof from man, with whom they share only a certain burden of scientific necessity. Anderson is obviously trying to suggest that there are more things on earth than are dreamt of in your laboratory science, but these things are left bewilderingly indistinct. The scientific view is not overthrown or replaced by any convincing non-scientific one. Two orders are introduced, and Anderson has attempted to affirm the one by choosing to ignore the other.

In the action the conflict between the individual and society is not resolved. Shakespearean tragedy involves a readjustment not only of the hero to elements of his own nature, but of the external order as well. *Winterset* ends in the bemused questioning of the problem play. Mio and Miriamne, like Anderson, can only wish vainly for some ultra-scientific, ultra-rationalistic order which will justify their agony. That agony, however, accomplishes nothing; the two die without purpose and without achievement, leaving antagonistic forces unchallenged, ominous, and chaotic. Their death is a

pitiful deceit, and the play, that curious mixture of art and science, of sixteenth- and twentieth-century thought, is a sentimental problem-play with some of the trappings of tragedy. It represents not a

dramatic form but a pastiche of forms. The term *poetic tragedy* consequently tends to dignify it with undeserved and misleading aesthetic implications.

## Syllabication

KEMP MALONE

**1. Syllabic structure.** A syllable is made up of one or more phonemes. The main phoneme of a syllable is called a sonant; the subordinate phonemes are known as consonants. A syllable has one and only one sonant; it may (but need not) have one or more consonants as well. The sonant of a syllable dominates its syllable by virtue of its relatively great sonority; the consonants of a syllable are subordinated to their sonant by virtue of their relatively slight sonority. The phonemes of English fall into three groups in terms of their function in the syllable: (1) phonemes that are always sonantal; (2) phonemes that may be either sonantal or consonantal; and (3) phonemes that are always consonantal. Under (1) come the vowels (e.g., *e* as in *get*) and the glides (e.g., *ai* as in *aisle*). Under (2) come the liquids, the nasals, and the semivowels. Under (3) come the fricatives, the affricates, and the stops. (See my paper, *MLQ*, III, 1942, 5-8.)

**2. Syllabic types.** Four types of syllables occur in English. A syllable of type A consists of a sonant only (*awe*); in type B the sonant is preceded (*law*), in type C it is followed (*am*), in type D it is both preceded and followed (*lumb*) by one or more consonants. In disyllabic words the types occur by twos; in trisyllabic words by threes; etc. Thus, the disyllabic word

*ago* shows the type combination AB; the trisyllabic word *Ohio*, the type combination ABA. Further disyllabic examples are given at the bottom of this page. The syllabic types serve as the phonetic basis for dividing words into syllables. This division of words is commonly called syllabication. It may be looked upon as a branch of spelling.

**3. Syllabic boundaries.** The determination of where one syllable ends and the next begins is not always easy. In conventional syllabication, as found in dictionaries, the actual pronunciation may be ignored if it conflicts with the morphemic analysis, the morphemic boundary being used instead. Thus, *training* is pronounced *trai-ning* but some dictionaries syllabicate it as *train-ing*, in accordance with the morphemic analysis into a base *train* and a suffix *ing*.<sup>1</sup> In other cases the syllabication is made to conform to the old school pronunciation of Latin. In this pronuncia-

<sup>1</sup> Here I use the hyphen to mark the syllabic boundary, but dictionaries commonly use other devices, as spacing or a centered dot. If the syllable is stressed, the mark of stress may be made to do double duty, serving also as a boundary marker. Thus, *train'ing* is entered as *train'ing* in the *NCD*. The first *n* of this word is unstressed and belongs to the second syllable, but that did not keep the Merriam editors from putting it in the stressed syllable, since in so doing they were following traditional practice.

AA	Io	BA	trio	CA	ox-eye	DA	righto
AB	Ely	BB	duty	CB	into	DB	twenty
AC	iamb	BC	react	CC	ack-ack	DC	week-end
AD	agog	BD	bequeath	CD	arctic	DD	signal

tion all stressed vowels in open syllables were long, irrespective of the actual Latin quantity (thus, *pā-ter* "father," although the *a* was short in Latin), and short stressed vowels were used in closed syllables only (i.e., syllables ending in a consonant). The syllabication of school Latin, then, served also to indicate whether the vowel of a stressed syllable was long or short. The same principle of syllabication was carried over to English, vowel length being indicated by making the vowel end the syllable, vowel shortness by making the syllable end with a consonant. Thus, *duty*, where the stressed vowel is long, was syllabicated *du-ty*, whereas *pity*, where the stressed vowel is short, was syllabicated *pit-y*. As it happens, the syllabication *du-ty* agrees with pronunciation and morphemic structure alike, but *pit-y* agrees with neither, both the pronunciation and the morphemic structure calling for the syllabication *pi-ty*.<sup>2</sup>

4. Morphemic syllabication. As we have seen, the conventional syllabication of some words is based not on their pronunciation but on their morphemic structure; that is, on their division into meaningful parts. Thus *housekeeper* may be syllabicated *house-keep-er*, without regard

<sup>2</sup> Note that some linguists of today (who ought to know better) take the medial consonant of *pity* and the like to belong to both syllables at once; more precisely, they consider that the beginning of the consonant belongs to the first syllable, the end of it to the second, the syllabic boundary splitting it in two. This analysis may have been suggested by the double letter often found in conventional orthography (e.g., in *ditty*). Certainly the analysis amounts to saying that the medial consonant in words of this kind is pronounced (as well as spelt) double. But a stressed double consonant is always long, so far as I know, whereas the medial consonant in words like *pity* and *ditty*, whether written single or double in ordinary spelling, is short—markedly short, indeed. In such words the doubling of the consonant in conventional writing serves merely as an orthographical device for marking the preceding vowel short. An English example of a truly double consonant is the *tt* of *rat-trap*. It will be noted that this *tt* is long, not merely written double.

to the pronunciation. This method of syllabication is improperly named, since the syllable is a phonetic, not a morphemic unit, but such a way of dividing words is reasonable in itself and well established in common usage. The dictionaries that syllabicate entry-words, however, do so twice: first in conventional spelling and then in a respelling for pronunciation. It would seem reasonable for the analyst to go by the morphemic structure in the first syllabication, by the syllabic structure proper in the second. Yet in fact, more often than not, tradition rather than reason governs in both syllabifications, and the division into syllables, though made twice over, may well reflect (1) the morphemic structure of the word only, (2) its pronunciation only, (3) a mixture of the two, or (4) neither the one nor the other.<sup>3</sup> It must be added that in many cases morphemic "syllabication" is not enough; it needs to be supplemented, in conventional word-division, by syllabication in terms of pronunciation. Thus, *waterfall* is divided into *water* and *fall* by meaningful parts, but one of these parts, *water*, though a single morpheme, is made up of two syllables and its further division into *wa* and *ter* must be made in terms of its pronunciation.

5. Syllable-markers. In syllabication by pronunciation, the conventional spelling serves as a trustworthy guide to the number of syllables: every word has as many syllable-markers as it has syllables. Such a marker may be a single letter, a double letter, a digraph, or trigraph. There are seven single-letter syllable-markers; *a*, *e*, *i*, *m*, *o*, *u*, *y*. See below for the double-letter syllable-markers. A digraph is a two-letter combination that represents a single phoneme. The particular digraphs

<sup>3</sup> Examples from the *NCD*: (1) *waiter*, *riding*; (2) *cognate*, *final*; (3) *clinical*, *opposite*; (4) *never*, *pity*. Similarly the *NWD*. The *ACD* distinguishes between the morphemic analysis and the pronunciation in many words of group (1) but otherwise does no better than the other two dictionaries.

that serve as syllable-markers are those that represent a sonantal phoneme; the ones that do not have this function are those that represent a consonantal phoneme. A trigraph is a three-letter combination that represents a single phoneme. Here too the trigraph must stand for a sonantal phoneme if it is to serve as a syllable-marker. Of the seven single letters that mark syllables, *m* so serves only in the final combinations *thm* and *sm*, as in *rhythm* and *spasm*.<sup>4</sup> The other six regularly mark a syllable unless they are silent and may mark a syllable even if silent; see the next section. The double letters that serve as syllable-markers are *aa*, *ee*, and *oo*, as in *baa*, *fleeting*, and *shampoo*. Such a double letter is to be distinguished from a sequence of two identical single letters, each of which marks a syllable, as in *Nausicaa*, *preeminent*, and *zoology*. Examples of syllable-marking digraphs and trigraphs are:

<i>ae</i>	Caesar	<i>ah</i>	dahlia	<i>ea</i>	beat	<i>ic</i>	indict	<i>ou</i>	soup
<i>ai</i>	vain	<i>al</i>	palmer	<i>ei</i>	vein	<i>ie</i>	believe	<i>ow</i>	fallow
<i>ao</i>	Maori	<i>as</i>	Arkansas	<i>eo</i>	people	<i>ig</i>	sign	<i>eau</i>	beau
<i>au</i>	audit	<i>aw</i>	Lawrence	<i>ey</i>	prey	<i>oa</i>	boat	<i>igh</i>	fight

Contrast digraphs and trigraphs like *sh* and *ssi*, as in *shin* and *mission*, which do not mark a syllable, and sequences like the *ao* of *aorta*, where each member represents a sonant.

6. Silent letters in syllabication. A silent letter is *x* it goes with the first marker treated, in syllabication, as if it were pronounced. Thus, *single* is divided as *sin-gle*, the silent *e* being treated as if it were pronounced. A silent letter which does not serve as a syllable-marker goes with the adjoining marker, if there is one. Examples: *guar-di-an* (silent *u*), *lus-cious*

\* Note that the *NCD* does not recognize the fact that *m* marks a syllable in such words. Thus, it enters *rhythm* and *spasm* and respells them for pronunciation without the use of the mark of stress (i.e., it treats them as monosyllabic words). The *NWD* recognizes the disyllabism of *rhythm* but not that of *spasm*. The *ACD* is consistently accurate in this matter.

(silent *s*), *fas-ten* (silent *t*). If no syllable-marker immediately adjoins, the silent letter may go with the preceding marker, as in *fore-close* (two silent *e*'s) or with the following one, as in *epis-tle* (silent *t*). A silent digraph is treated like a silent letter. Example: *high-ness*.

7. Single letters between syllable-markers. In conventional syllabication a single letter (other than *x*) between syllable-markers goes with the second marker (a) if this marker represents a stressed sonant, (b) if both markers represent unstressed sonants, and (c) if the first marker represents a long stressed sonant. It goes with the first marker (d) if this marker represents a short stressed sonant. If the single letter is *x* it goes with the first marker in all cases. Examples: (a) the *c* of *mas-ti-cate*; (b) the *c* of *men-di-cant*; (c) the *c* of *va-cant*; (d) the *c* of *vic-ar*. The exceptional treatment of words like *vicar*

has nothing to do with morphemic structure but shows a traditional device for marking the stressed vowel short (see Sec. 3 above). It would be desirable to do away with the distinction between (a, b, c) on the one hand and (d) on the other by setting up the simple rule that a single letter other than *x* goes with the second marker in all cases.<sup>5</sup>

8. Double letters between syllable-markers. In a word as respelt for pronunciation a double letter occurs between syllable-markers only if the phoneme it represents is truly double, as in *rat-trap*. (See Footnote 3.) The syllabication of such a respelling makes no problems: one splits the double letter up, one member going with

\* This rule is based on the pronunciation, of course; in morphemic syllabication the single letter would go with the first marker in all the examples given. For *x* see Sec. 11.

each marker. If the word is syllabicated as it stands (i.e., without respelling for pronunciation), a double letter between syllable-markers may or may not be split up in this way. It is split up (a) if its two members belong to different morphemes or (b) if its doubleness has come about by derivative doubling. Examples: (a) *dis-solve*; (b) *re-mit-tance*. We need not comment further on (a) and like cases. In example (b) the *tt* is a case of derivative doubling: the word *remittance* was made by adding the suffix *ance* to the basic form *remit* and in the process the final *t* of the basic form was doubled in writing (not in speech). The extra letter thus given to the base is treated, in conventional syllabication, as if it made part of the suffix. In like manner *repelling*, a derivative of *repel*, is divided into syllables as *re-pel-ling*. If however the basic form itself ends in a double letter the derivative may be so syllabicated that this double letter is not divided between the adjoining syllable-markers. Thus, *canvasser*, a derivative of the verb *canvass*, is syllabicated as *can-vass-er*. Yet the double letter may be split up even in such cases. Examples: *clas-si-fy* (from *class*) and *pro-fess-or* (from *profess*). It is clear that such splitting up goes contrary to the morphemic analysis and departs from the principle laid down in Sec. 4 above. The syllabifications *class-i-fy* and *pro-fess-or* are the only proper ones if this principle is followed. We may go further. In derivative doubling, too, the double letter properly belongs to the basic form and the derivatives should be divided into syllables accordingly. Thus, the syllabication *re-mitt-ance* brings out the morphemic structure, whereas *re-mit-tance* obscures this structure. In monomorphemic words like *arrow* one might expect the pronunciation to serve as the basis for syllabication even though the word is not respelt, but by convention the double letter is here split up, one letter going with each syllable-marker.

#### 9. Digraphs between syllable-markers.

We saw above (Sec. 5) that some digraphs serve as syllable-markers. Others do not have this function and may occur between syllable-markers. The digraphs that may occur in this position fall into two types. Examples of the first type: *ce*, *ci*, *gi*, *qu*, *si*, *ti* as in *ocean*, *special*, *region*, *piquant*, *vision*, *equation*; of the second type: *ch*, *gh*, *sh*, *th*, as in *machine*, *aching*, *bachelor*, *laughing*, *ashy*, *ethics*. A digraph between syllable-markers is not split up, except in a few special cases like the *te* of *righteous*, where the morphemic analysis necessarily puts the *t* in the basic form, the *e* in the suffix. In general a digraph between syllable-markers goes with the second marker if (a) this marker stands for a stressed sonant, (b) if both markers stand for unstressed sonants, and (c) if the first marker stands for a long stressed sonant. Examples: (a) the *ch* of *a-chieve*; (b) the *th* of *em-pa-thy*; (c) the *ge* of *cou-ra-geous*. So far, it will be noted, the rules for digraphs are parallel to those for single letters (see Sec. 7 above). If now the first marker stands for a short stressed sonant, a digraph of the first type (as *ce*, *ci*, *gi*, *qu*, *si*, *ti*; see above) still goes with the second marker, but one of the second type goes with the first marker. Examples: *spe-cial*, *vi-sion*; *bish-op*, *fidg-et*.<sup>6</sup> It would be a most desirable reform to do away with this artificial distinction between the two types and set up the simple rule that a digraph, if not itself a syllable-marker, goes in syllabication with the syllable-marker that follows it. (The same rule is applicable to trigraphs between syllable-markers.)

10. Standing-sequence letter-groups. The standing sequences of English fall into two main groups: sonantal sequences (i.e., sequences that contain a sonant) and

<sup>6</sup> In respellings for pronunciation only the second type occurs, and the syllabication changes accordingly. Thus, the *NCD* has the entry *spe'cial*, with a digraph *ci* in the unstressed syllable, but this is followed by the respelling *spesh'al*, with the equivalent digraph *sh* in the stressed syllable.

consonantal sequences (i.e., sequences made up of consonants only). A letter-group that represents a sonantal sequence always includes a syllable-marker and normally does not stand between syllable-markers. A letter-group that represents a consonantal sequence never includes a syllable-marker and may perfectly well stand between syllable-markers. In syllabication, letter-groups representing sonantal sequences are commonly kept intact. Examples: *eau*, *eu*, *ew*, *oi*, *oy* as in *beau-tiful*, *pneu-mat-ic*, *re-new-ing*, *em-broi-der*, *hoy-den*. Exceptions in which the letter-group is divided, as the *ue* of *cru-el-ty*, go back to a traditional analysis which gives to the word more syllables than it actually has in current speech. Thus, *cruelty* is now pronounced in two syllables only (*cru-el-ty*), not in three as in earlier English. Here the analyst had better follow the current pronunciation instead of keeping a traditional analysis that no longer fits the facts.

11. Consonantal standing sequences. These may be (1) non-initial, (2) non-final, or (3) unrestricted. A letter-group representing a non-initial sequence (i.e., one found only in non-initial position in a word) is always divided in syllabication if it stands between syllable-markers. Examples: *ct*, *ft*, *lf*, *mb*, *nd*, *nt*, *pt*, *rs* as in *tac-tics*, *raf-ter*, *pil-fer*, *lum-ber*, *a-ban-don*, *pon-tiff*, *skeptic*, *per-son*. The sequences [ks] and [gz] are often if not usually represented by the single letter *x* in conventional orthography. When so written, they cannot be divided and the *x* goes with the first marker (see Sec. 7), but in respellings for pronunciation they are divided between the markers like the other non-initial sequences. Thus. *Ex-e-ter*

- 
- |     |                    |              |
|-----|--------------------|--------------|
| (a) | per-si-flage       | in-te-grate  |
| (b) | an-ti-phlo-gis-tic | in-te-gral   |
| (c) | sti-fling          | fra-grant    |
| (d) | mel-lif-lu-ous     | in-teg-ri-ty |

and *ex-ult* in ordinary spelling but *ek-se-ter* and *eg-zult* as respelt for pronunciation.

A letter-group representing a non-final sequence (i.e., one found only in non-final position in a word) may or may not be divided in conventional syllabication when it stands between syllable-markers. If not divided, it always goes with the second marker. A group with *s* for first member is not divided if the sequence it stands for heads its morpheme and is followed by a stressed sonant. Examples: *re-splen-dent*, *a-squint*. If the *s*-group represents a sequence divided between two morphemes, the group may be divided accordingly. Example: *dis-please*. Here it makes no difference whether one syllabicates by morphemic analysis or by pronunciation; the result is the same. In many words, however, the two kinds of syllabication part company. Thus, *wastrel* by morphemic analysis gives *wast-rel*; by pronunciation, *was-trel*. If the *s*-group represents a sequence that belongs to one morpheme but does not head it, the stress pattern determines whether or not the group is divided. Examples: *il-lus-tri-ous*; *il-lu-str-a-tion*. Here the group *str* is divided in the first example, where it stands for a sequence preceded by a stressed sonant, but it is not divided in the second example, where an unstressed sonant precedes. Some however syllabicate *il-lus-tra-tion* as well as *il-lus-tri-ous*. A group that does not begin with *s* goes with the second marker (a) if this marker stands for a stressed sonant, (b) if both markers stand for unstressed sonants, and (c) if the first marker stands for a long stressed sonant. It is divided between the two markers (d) if the first marker stands for a short stressed sonant (compare Sec. 7 above). Examples: *fl* (*phl*), *gr*, *pl*, *tr* as in

- |                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| mul-ti-ply         | ar-bi-trate |
| mul-ti-pli-ca-tion | co-que-try  |
| re-du-pli-cate     | tes-ta-trix |
| trip-li-cate       | met-ri-cal  |

In some dictionaries, however, the group goes with the second marker if the first marker is spelt *ou*, irrespective of the dis-

tinctions given above.<sup>7</sup> It would be simpler, and more sensible, to treat type (d) like types (a, b, c), whether the first marker is *ou* or not. Compare Sec. 9 above.

A letter-group representing an unrestricted sequence (i.e., one found in initial, medial, or final position in a word) regularly begins with *s* and behaves like the non-final letter-groups in *s* taken up above. Examples: *sc*, *sp*, *st* as in *re-spect*, *a-stound*, *mas-cot*, *whis-per*.

12. Medial-sequence letter-groups. Besides the standing sequences of English

<sup>7</sup> Thus the *NCD* has the entry *coup'let*, with *pl* heading the unstressed syllable, but in the respelling for pronunciation the standing sequence is divided, *p* being put in the stressed syllable. Compare also the entries *dou'blet* and *Dub'lin* of this dictionary.

there exist sequences that occur in medial position only. Such sequences may be called medial or intersonantal. A letter-group representing a medial sequence always stands between syllable-markers and in syllabication is divided between these markers. Examples: *bj*, *thl*, as in *sub-jec-tive*, *pen-tath-lon*. A medial sequence may include a standing sequence; that is, a standing sequence may make part of a medial sequence. The letter-group representing such a medial sequence is so divided that the letters which represent the standing sequence are kept together. Examples: *nchl*, *ngu*, *nstr* as in *Bench-ley*, *lan-guish*, *re-mon-strate*. Here *nch*, *gu* [gw], and *str* represent standing sequences that make part of medial sequences.

## Present Trends in the Study and Teaching of American Literature

RANDALL STEWART

CERTAIN trends in the study and teaching of literature are the same at least, I should think they would be—regardless of the branch of literature or the period. I have in mind especially the Critical Revolution of the 1930's and 1940's, which succeeded to a marked degree in substituting a critical approach for the old historical approach. There is not much point in arguing about this now; the Revolution is a *fait accompli*. The chief practical result for us as teachers of literature is that we now have to talk *about the work* whether we want to or not, whether the work is worth talking about or not, and whether we have anything to say worth saying about the work or not. It is no longer possible for the teacher to talk about everything except the work, and

by-pass the work because the bell has rung.

My impression is that the critical approach dominates English departments at the present time. I myself find this quite refreshing, having been brought up, in the olden times, more on the history of literature than the literature itself. American literature, being taught almost without exception in English departments, enjoys along with English literature the advantage of the new critical insights.

But the situation of American literature has been all along a little different from that of English literature, and perhaps still is, despite the fact that teachers of American literature are blown upon by the same winds of doctrine as their colleagues in English literature. From the

beginning, American literature has been bound up more closely than English literature with historical and cultural matters. It was believed for a long time that American literature could not stand on its own feet as literature, and if the study of our own writers was to be justified, an appeal would have to be made to their historical importance.

Vernon Parrington gave the study of American literature a great stimulus with his *Main Currents of American Thought*, published in 1927-1930. But it was still the historical importance which was emphasized. Parrington did not care particularly for literature as such. He dismissed almost contemptuously some of our very greatest writers—Hawthorne and James, for example—because he thought they did not contribute to his social thesis. For a good long while—so great was the influence of the *Main Currents*—it was difficult, if not impossible, to use the term *belles lettres* except pejoratively in an American context. Literary values were turned topsy-turvy in Parrington. Freneau, a mediocre poet, assumed importance because his politics were "good." Poe, a considerably better poet than Freneau, had no importance because, forsooth, he had *no* politics, which was even worse than having "bad" politics.

No assessment of present trends can be made without an attempt to determine the present status of Parrington in the teaching of American literature. My impression is that in the literary courses—the courses taught by teachers who have come under the influence of the Critical Revolution—Parrington has lost ground. This is inevitable, since the critical approach is concerned with a literary work's intrinsic qualities more than with its importance as a social document. From the standpoint of the critical approach, Poe is more important than Freneau.

It is worth noting, however, that the development of American Studies programs has perhaps tended to restore to Parrington some of the importance which

the critical approach had deprived him of. For the American Studies approach is likely to be concerned with a literary work primarily as a social document. If Parrington is no longer required reading in the literary course, it is reasonable to surmise that he may now be required reading for American Studies majors.

The American literature situation, as I have been trying to suggest, may present some special problems. The situation may be somewhat awkward in colleges which have a major in American Studies, especially with reference to the introductory course. There is normally only one such course, and the question sometimes arises whether it should be a course in literature, or a course in the "American Mind." Sometimes, a good deal of tension develops at this point, and the teacher of the introductory course is in danger of becoming a split personality. His course is probably required of both English majors and American Studies majors. Shall he please the Parringtonians, or the followers of Brooks and Warren? He can hardly please both.

I heard not long ago of a vacancy in the filling of which there was some dispute as to whether a literary man or an American Studies man should be chosen. The appointment was to be in the English department, but the Director of American Studies, who was a member of another department, felt that he should take a hand, and, accordingly, wrote to one of the outstanding American Studies universities, asking a friend there to nominate an American Studies Ph.D. for this English department post, his reason being, I suppose, that he wanted to make sure that his majors got a good American Studies course in American literature. What actually happened, I am not sorry to report, was that the English department held its ground, and in the end the appointment went to a literary person who appreciates literature as literature, a person, that is to say, who thinks that Henry James is not only a better novelist, but a more im-

portant writer, than Harriet Beecher Stowe. This was a signal victory for the literary position as opposed to what we might call the social position. The fact remains, however, that American literature courses are constantly in danger, nowadays, of falling into the hands of intellectual-social historians (sometimes doctrinaire historians) who would reject Shakespeare himself because he has no "ideas," or perchance the wrong "ideas."

I well remember my asking a Parringtonian candidate on doctor's orals (he had a good right to be Parringtonian, being the son of the author of *Main Currents*) a question about Edmund Burke, and the candidate's replying, "I never could read him." If the question had been about Tom Paine, the answer would have been fluent and well-informed enough. And yet, from a literary standpoint, Burke is surely a greater writer than Paine.

Historians, curiously enough, sometimes turn out to be strangely unliterary, or non-literary. Some years ago, I heard a brilliant series of lectures by a distinguished intellectual historian on the subject, "New England Religious Thought." Two good writers—Edwards and Emerson—were treated in these lectures along with a dozen or more mediocre writers, but one would never have guessed from the treatment itself who were the interesting writers, and who the mediocre ones. There was no hint anywhere of the literary quality of Edwards and Emerson which lifted them above the other writers in this theological discussion.

I hope that nothing I have said will be construed as an objection to American Studies programs as such. Such programs are doing an important work in synthesizing the various approaches to the study of our culture. My only contention is that teachers of American literature, like teachers of other literatures, should be, first of all, lovers of literature. They should have a feeling for literature. They should rest the case for literature, whether American literature or some other, pri-

marily on the literary virtues.

Another trend is the emergence of the "great writers." I mean that certain American writers have won a marked eminence in the English curriculum. One of the first graduate seminars in American literature, I imagine, was Killis Campbell's seminar in Poe, given at the University of Texas. Some years later, Campbell cautiously added a seminar in Whitman. In the late 1920's, Stanley Williams gave graduate work in American literature at Yale a conservative start by offering a seminar in Emerson and Hawthorne. Some years later, F. O. Matthiessen began giving his course at Harvard in "Five American Writers"—Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, and Whitman—a great course which was transmuted into a great book, *American Renaissance*, published in 1941. I don't know who gave the first seminar in Mark Twain; my guess would be Walter Blair, at Chicago.

I saw not long ago in the bulletin of an Eastern university an announcement of a new graduate course in American literature which was called, "Studies in Hawthorne, Melville, James, and Faulkner." (It is interesting to check these four against Matthiessen's five.) I wonder how many teachers of American literature, if given their choice of the four authors they would like best to teach, would name these four. I imagine a considerable number would so choose—especially if the choosers were youngsters under 45. But I do not mean to malign the oldsters. I am an oldster myself, and I would choose these very four, as the four greatest American writers, towering above all the others like peaks above the foothills.

If what I have said has any truth in it, then we are confronted here with a trend. Hawthorne has long been esteemed, but never has he been the object of so much critical interest as at the present time. Critical interest in Melville continues very high, and the same may be said of James. Faulkner, of course, is a newcomer, but the critical interest in him is very

great. I happen to know that in one very good university a year or two ago, there were no less than six courses which devoted a considerable amount of time to Faulkner. One almost got the impression that student dissatisfaction was likely to become audible in almost any course in which there was no Faulkner. It remains to be seen whether he will continue to hold the interest of students and teachers alike, as the other three have done over the years. My own prediction is that he will.

Another trend is the amazing amount of publication going on in the American field. In the most recent *PMLA* annual bibliography (for 1955), the American section fills 30 pages; the English section fills 35 pages. I don't want to try to prove too much by statistics of this kind (the ratio was 27 to 35 in 1954), but it does seem to me that we are confronted here by an interesting bit of evidence. It would seem that almost half of the publishing effort of our fraternity goes into the American field. And what does this mean? Well, it would seem that a large number of energetic young people have been entering the American field in recent years. It would seem, also—since in no English department that I know of is the ratio of American to English offerings anything like as high as 30 to 35—that the present proportion of American offerings is likely to be stepped up when these energetic young people, who are doing such a large proportion of the publishing, begin to make their influence felt more perceptibly. These figures, to me, point to an inevitable departmental readjustment as between English and American offerings. I make this prediction with some confidence because when you have nearly half of the total scholarly and critical publication of English departments located in the American field, and, say, only about one-fifth (a guess) of the course offerings in that field, you have a state of imbalance which is going to correct itself, sooner or later, from sheer physical pressure. (I will not

comment on the structure of the Modern Language Association in the light of this general state of affairs.)

I am not advocating an equality between English and American offerings; American literature is not the equal of English literature. But I think the ratio will level off at a somewhat higher figure for American literature than now exists in most places. I might add the opinion that too many graduate students, proportionately, have been and are still going into American literature. If it was "smart," professionally, for a young person thirty years ago to go into American literature, it might be equally "smart," and for the same reason, for a young person today to go into Renaissance or Mediaeval studies.

I counted the number of titles for various authors, English and American, in the 1955 *PMLA* Bibliography, with the following (to me) interesting results. I am aware of the limitations of this kind of poll. I have made no attempt to assess titles, or distinguish among books, articles, and mere notes. But the bare figures are nevertheless interesting and suggestive. (The 1954 figures are given in parentheses.)

Shakespeare	135 (106)	Faulkner	30 (44)
Whitman	53 (23)	Emerson	29 (10)
Milton	43 (54)	Hemingway	28 (8)
Hawthorne	39 (20)	Dickens	26 (13)
Chaucer	33 (44)	Eliot	25 (24)
Pound	33 (10)	Thoreau	23 (21)
Melville	32 (15)	Stevens	21 (3)
James	30 (27)	Wordsworth	18 (12)
Clemens	30 (25)	Keats	17 (20)

But enough of this. These figures, as equivocal as they are, show where our colleagues are working, in largest numbers and with most energy.

Good solid scholarly work is still being done. Students of American literature welcome the appearance of definitive new texts like Johnson's Emily Dickinson. The edition of Melville's work, sponsored by the Melville Society, moves forward at a deliberate pace. I was delighted to learn recently that a new edition of Jonathan

Edwards has been projected, to be published at Yale. There is need of definitive editions of other American writers, of William Gilmore Simms, for example. Recent impressive examples of historical scholarship are Henry Pochmann's study of German influences in America, and the late Stanley Williams' study of Spanish influences in America. Both are monumental contributions.

The fact remains, however, that our age is primarily critical, and most of the work being done now by members of English departments can be called more critical than historical. This is something to rejoice in, not to deplore. The current critical impetus is very great, and the current critical movement has an important contribution to make—namely, the re-evaluation of our literature, and that is what is going on now at an unprecedented rate. Hundreds of American books are receiving now almost their first "close" reading. If the "story" of American literature had to be written a few years ago by Professor Spiller and his associates in the light of modern scholarship, it will have to be rewritten before too long in the light of modern criticism.

It is almost too big a job to keep up with this sweeping re-evaluation. In mak-

ing the other day one of my too infrequent browsing forays in the periodical room, I noticed in a "little magazine" a reference to Professor Leslie Fiedler's recent appraisal of *Pudd'nhead Wilson* as a "fantastically good book." In a little magazine on the next shelf (the little magazines, by the way, are the best places to look for the interesting re-appraisals), Professor Richard Chase was saying some complimentary things about *The Grandissimes*. When people like Chase and Fiedler and their younger colleagues in the critical movement set themselves to reading through the corpus of American literature to see, and report, *what the books are really like as books*, the result is bound to be a refreshingly unstereotyped picture.

The challenge to the teachers of American literature today, in both school and college, is to throw away the old handbooks, the clichés and shop-worn price-tags, and get in direct touch with, indeed become an active part of, this wonderfully fresh exploration and criticism—this new inventory—of our literature. The challenge to all of us today, young and old alike, is to become *readers*, and to read the literary works themselves with a new attentiveness, perceptiveness, and independence.

"... I can't stand it. I been there before."

So much has been thought and said, and our criteria are so variable, that Matthew Arnold himself might falter in picking out the best. It was simpler to choose, from Hebrew scriptures or Greek translations, a Pentateuch or a Septuagint than it is for latterday Scribes to agree on the Hundred Best Books of the world. Happily, no canon is immutable: only the other day the irrefragable doctors of Saint John's College, Annapolis, announced that *Huckleberry Finn* had been promoted to classical status—which presumably means that one of the previous hundred titles has been demoted to the Apocrypha.

—HARRY LEVIN, "New Frontiers of Knowledge in the Humanities," *Harvard Library Bulletin*, X (Spring 1956), 160; reprinted by permission.

# Round Table

## A NEW COLLEGE COURSE IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

GERHARD FRIEDRICH

To the making of anthology-textbooks of American literature there is no end! A survey published in 1952 showed that twenty-seven one- or multi-volume anthologies of American literature were then available for college use, and since that time at least eleven additional new or revised editions have been printed.<sup>1</sup> The persistence of anthology-centered college courses in American literature is all the more surprising because, since World War II, hundreds of competently edited, unabridged, and inexpensive reprint editions of American authors have been published which recommend themselves not merely as supplementary texts, but as key texts.<sup>2</sup> At any rate, the anthology-method—an obvious and excellent means for indicating wealth in terms of numbers, particularly around a theme or issue—leaves indeed much to be desired when applied to American literature as a whole, while it tends to reinforce a questionable perspective, consciously or subconsciously conditioned by patriotic responses.

It is a disturbing fact that a regular one- or two-volume anthology simply cannot do justice to longer works; it must feature them in excerpts or omit them altogether. Theoretically, this shortcoming can be remedied by supplementary reading of major works, but in practice some crucial questions arise from the desire to use a standard anthology along with a series of heavier outside readings. Which are to receive primary

attention: the "representative" anthology assignments or the longer works? How many of the more extensive masterpieces can be included in an anthology-oriented course, and which ones are to be accorded preference? Within the scope of one or two semesters, can detailed attention to individual works be successfully combined with full-length, survey-type breadth treatment? More central even are these questions: What should properly be the concerns of literary study? and What is to be understood by the term *literature*?

American literary endeavors have had a long foreground of extra-literary preoccupations. Geography and anthropology, historical and biographical events, economic and social problems, theological and political controversy have all commanded countless pens, skilled and unskilled, but for many generations the result was seldom so imaginative a projection of an experienced world view as to be of universal human significance. When the United States was young and, in the course of things, still poor in literary achievements, when Sydney Smith could assert, "Literature the Americans have none" (1818), and proceed to ask pointedly, "In the four quarters of the globe, who reads an American book, or goes to an American play?" (1820), then it was understandable that an inverted colonial complex should exaggerate cherished documents and imitative, second-rate poetry, drama, and fiction into great examples of an indigenous literature, or should—with a keener sense of perception—echo the divided judgment of Touchstone: "an ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own." However, for at least a century now there has been no need for such inflated or pathetic valuations, and a one-or two-semester course in American literature which insists on acquainting the college student with Wigglesworth's "The Day of Doom," Edwards' hellfire sermons, and the pronouncements of Jefferson and Lincoln, makes dubious excursions into other—though related—dis-

<sup>1</sup> See Ben W. Fuson, *Which Text Shall I Choose for American Literature?* (Park College Press, 1952; *CEA Critic*, XV, Jan. 1953); and Nina R. Thompson, ed., *The Cumulative Book Index* (1953-to-date).

<sup>2</sup> See Kurt Enoch, *The Paper-Bound Book: Twentieth-Century Publishing Phenomenon*, preprinted from *The Library Quarterly*, XXIV, (July 1954), 211-225, with an appendix of "Famous Authors and Important Books Reprinted in Inexpensive Paper-Bound Book Form"; and Robert M. Orton, ed., *Catalog of Reprints in Series*, 16th ed. (1955), plus *Supplement to Sixteenth Edition* (Spring 1956).

cipines, at the expense of authors and works more strictly literary. Since there is even at best a lack of time for figures like Hawthorne and Melville, James and Dreiser, should one not resolutely apply to American literature and to the teaching of it on the college level the same high standards of selectivity which prevail with regard to French, German, Italian, Russian, or Spanish literature? (English literature is usually accorded many more semesters.)<sup>8</sup>

Together with such emphasis on literary figures of comparable stature, there should go the recognition, translated into educational practice, that great imaginative works are essentially indivisible. It is in fact today easily possible to compile a complete series of individualized American literature texts much richer and more flexible than the standard anthologies, at a cost not appreciably greater. As an example I cite the booklist of the reorganized English 25 course, "American Literature to Whitman," at Haverford College:

Poe, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. T. O. Mabbott (Modern Library College Editions, 1951); Hawthorne, *Selected Tales and Sketches*, ed. Hyatt H. Waggoner (Rinehart Editions, 1950); Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, ed. John C. Gerber (Modern Library College Editions, 1950); Melville, *Moby Dick*, ed. Newton Arvin (Rinehart Editions, 1948); [Melville, *Selected Tales and Poems*, ed. Richard Chase, (Rinehart Editions, 1950) is used during the second semester]; Emerson, *Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed. Reginald L. Cook (Rinehart Editions, 1950)—also used as a Freshman English text; Thoreau, *Walden*, ed. Joseph Wood Krutch (Harper's Modern Classics, 1950); Whitman, *Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose*, ed. Sculley Bradley (Rinehart Editions, 1949); *Poetry of the New England Renaissance, 1790-1890* ed. George F. Whicher (Rinehart Editions, 1950).

For provocative estimates by a contemporary American and by a modern British writer the following two texts have been added:

<sup>8</sup> Several anthologies have made advances in this direction, notably: Jones, Leisy, and Ludwig, *Major American Writers*, 3rd ed. (1952); Pochmann and Allen, *Masters of American Literature* (1949); Prescott and Sanders, *An Introduction to American Prose* and *An Introduction to American Poetry* (1931-32); and Stewart and Bethurum, *Living Masterpieces of American Literature* (1954).

Lowell, "A Fable for Critics," in *Representative Selections*, ed. Clark & Foerster (1947); Lawrence, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (Doubleday Anchor Book, 1953).

Total cost of the ten texts: \$7.65. Similar lists can be arranged for any period of American literature, to fit a variety of concepts and purposes. The enormous educational resources available for American literature courses in reprint series have simply not yet been sufficiently realized to provoke widespread and radical rethinking of established course patterns.

In the first semester of American literature at Haverford, by choice as much as by necessity, the literary record up to 1800 is compressed into summary treatment. There are three introductory lectures, on the concept of American literature and its beginnings (Hakluyt), the century of description and theology, and the century of reason and politics (Edwards, Franklin), followed by a review of Irving, Bryant, and Cooper. Thereafter class discussions are based on close analysis of assigned readings. Care is taken to have the course schedule provide extra time for the heavier reading assignments. The Hawthorne-Poe-Melville and Emerson-Thoreau-Whitman triads, with their parallels and contrasts in Romantic idealism, constitute the core of the first semester, and are followed by briefer study of five New England poets, namely Whittier, Very, Holmes, Lowell, and Longfellow.

The second-semester course, "American Literature from Whitman to Dreiser," is at present for several reasons more loosely organized, but continues the English 25 approach with special emphasis on the Twain-Howells-James triad of Realism and a similar Crane-Dreiser exposition of Naturalism. The second-semester booklist includes:

Whitman, *Leaves of Grass and Selected Prose*, ed. Sculley Bradley (Rinehart Editions, 1949)—carried over from English 25; Dickinson, in *Poetry of the New England Renaissance, 1790-1890* (Rinehart Editions, 1950)—carried over from English 25; Lanier, multigraphed poems; Melville, *Selected Tales and Poems*, ed. Richard Chase (Rinehart Editions, 1950); *The Portable Mark Twain*, ed. Bernard DeVoto (Viking Portable, 1955); Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, ed. George Arms (Rinehart Editions, 1949); James, *The Turn of the Screw*; *The*

*Lesson of the Master*, ed. Heywood Broun (Modern Library, 1930); James, *The Ambassadors*, ed. Martin W. Sampson & John C. Gerber (Harper's Modern Classics, 1948); Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage, and Selected Prose and Poetry*, ed. William M. Gibson (Rinehart Editions, 1956); Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, (Modern Library, 1932); John Cournos, ed., *American Short Stories of the Nineteenth Century* (Everyman's Library, 1930).

Total cost of the required texts: \$9.40.

An important benefit of thus concentrating on major literary figures and their most accomplished works is that an organic literary structure comes to supersede the extraneous classifications traditionally borrowed from American history. In the process of tracing a literary movement directly by extensive as well as intensive reading in the most prominent authors, it proves exceedingly helpful that our key writers have left statements as to their literary aims and practices. Some of these are usually acknowledged in American literature courses, but far too little use is yet made of such authentic and highly illuminating commentaries, e. g., of Twain's remarks on humorists in general and himself in particular. Beyond that, the significant interrelationships of American authors, which alone would go far toward providing a genuine developmental structure, are hardly exploited in the standard course. What Poe had to say, not only about Hawthorne, but also about Emerson; what the neighbors Hawthorne and Melville wrote about each other; what complexity of relations existed between Whitman and Emerson; exactly how James appraised Hawthorne; or, more recently, the searching and self-revealing comments of Dreiser and Hemingway on Mark Twain: these and other links can be of

considerable value in charting the course of American literature to date. (Curiously, Hawthorne's estimate of Melville and Emerson's essay on Thoreau, for example, have never been surpassed.)

The new introductory American literature course at Haverford, while abandoning the standard anthology as a textbook and relying instead heavily on inexpensive one-author reprints, is then guided by the following principles:

(1) American literature has fully come into its own as creative literature, and should be taught as such—not as a series of illustrations for actual or traditionalized historical developments.

(2) Major American authors are so numerous and distinct that attention should be focused on them and their most significant imaginative achievements—not scattered over a host of less distinguished writers for the sake of survey-coverage.

(3) Literary works are conceived and intended as unified creations, and should therefore as a rule be read and judged in full—not merely by sample excerpts.

(4) The interrelationship among major American—and European—authors have been so manifold and of such signal importance as to furnish a meaningful internal structure, and the development of American literature should properly be indicated by these literary links—not by an extraneous chronology and terminology. This is perhaps the most pioneering feature of the experimental Haverford course.\*

\*The closest approach to a companion text, now again available, is Edmund Wilson, ed., *The Shock of Recognition; the Development of Literature in the United States Recorded by the Men Who Made It* (1943, 1955).

## EARLY LIGHT ON POETRY

JOSEPH SLATER

One day last spring I took over a class of bottom-of-the-barrel freshmen who because of the illness of two previous instructors had reached the next-to-last week of the year without having studied a line of poetry. They were not Brooks and Warren types, obviously, and there was not enough time

anyway, not even for the Pocket Frost. I thought perhaps a single poem, worked over very thoroughly, might be best. But not "Pruferlock." And not "Lycidas."

That evening at dinner my seven-year-old daughter, in a display of erudition and patriotism, sang the first stanza of "The

Star-Spangled Banner." I listened to the words for the first time, in a sense, and listened with astonishment, because what I heard was an intricate and sophisticated poem. My freshmen, I realized, knew that poem as well as my daughter did and understood it, probably, about as well. Next day I had twenty-five copies mimeographed, and during the next two weeks I subjected "The Star-Spangled Banner" to the red glare of classroom analysis. The results were so good that I mean to use the same device with students from all levels of the barrel.

Even at the beginning, I encountered none of the usual resistance to poetry as esoteric and useless. Everyone in the class had known the poem for twelve years and could see and almost say that it had an important function and that it was quite different from *The Man without a Country* and the

pledge to the Flag. Partly out of piety, partly out of embarrassment at discovering obscurities in the alphabet, everyone seemed interested in dissection, evaluation, and even genealogy.

Even the problem of the text, that dustiest corner of the study of literature, raised hands and provoked arguments. No student, having learned the poem by ear in the first or second grade, carried in his mind precisely the version that appeared on his mimeographed sheet; and so questions of authenticity arose and problems involving revision and oral transmission. Actually, the textual difficulties in a study of "The Star-Spangled Banner" are very slight. The version published in the Baltimore *Patriot* on September 20, 1814, is reasonably faithful to the original manuscript and generally accepted:

Defense of Fort M'Henry  
Tune—Anacreon in Heaven

- 1 O! say can you see, by the dawn's early light,
- 2 What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming,
- 3 Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
- 4 O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
- 5 And the Rockets' red glare, the Bombs bursting in air,
- 6 Gave proof through the night, that our Flag was still there;
- 7 O! say, does that star-spangled Banner yet wave,
- 8 O'er the Land of the free, and the home of the brave?
- 9 On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
- 10 Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
- 11 What is that, which the breeze o'er the towering steep,
- 12 As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
- 13 Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
- 14 In full glory reflected now shines on the stream.
- 15 'Tis the star-spangled banner. O! long may it wave
- 16 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.
- 17 And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
- 18 That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
- 19 A home and a country should leave us no more?
- 20 Their blood has washed out their foul footsteps pollution.
- 21 No refuge could save the hireling and slave,
- 22 From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave;
- 23 And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave,
- 24 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.
- 25 O! thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
- 26 Between their lov'd home and the war's desolation.
- 27 Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the Heav'n-rescued land,
- 28 Praise the power that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!
- 29 Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just,
- 30 And this be our motto—"In God is our Trust."
- 31 And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave,
- 32 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

But variants do exist, in students' memories and in print, and they are carefully and conveniently listed in Sonneck's *The Star Spangled Banner* (1914). A little consideration of the relationship between the 1814 manuscript and the 1814 broadsides, the 1840 autograph copies and the 1857 *Collected Poems*, will help to prepare readers for the textual hardships of Whitman and Yeats.

The history of "The Star-Spangled Banner" illustrates in a way especially agreeable to college students the working of a literary tradition. They are pleased to learn that it is modeled line for line on an eighteenth-century drinking song, the official anthem of a gentlemen's club called the Anacreontic Society which met twice a month to hear "a grand concert," eat "an elegant supper," and sing improper songs. If they have any sense of the past they are interested to learn that "To Anacreon in Heaven" was written in 1775, before the Society changed its meeting place from the London Coffee House to the Crown and Anchor Tavern and that Haydn was once guest of honor at an Anacreontic concert. They need not be history majors to find profit in the knowledge that the melody and the form of "To Anacreon in Heaven" were used by Thomas Paine (who later, for political reasons, became Robert Treat Paine) in an anti-French poem of 1798 called "Adams and Liberty" and that three years before the bombs burst on Fort McHenry the heroes of Tippecanoe had been mourned in "The Battle of the Wabash: / a

Patriotic Song / Writt'n by Joseph Hutton / To the favourite Air of / Anacreon in Heaven." There is cultural history as well as comedy in the fact that the chief opposition to the adoption of "The Star-Spangled Banner" as the American national anthem came from prohibitionists.

Perhaps the students' most salutary experience in reading the song rather than singing it is the discovery that without some fairly detailed knowledge of biography, geography, military history, and even ordnance ("Did they use *rockets* in the War of 1812?") many lines make no sense at all. Even the moderate antiquity of "The Star-Spangled Banner" turns out to be pedagogically useful. Certain words which no dictionary would call archaic cause as much trouble as "yelept." Only one of my freshmen thought that "host" might be something other than the antonym of "guest"; he remembered that it was part of the Mass. At the meaning of "discloses" no one would even guess. "O'er" and "doth" were familiar as sounds but hard to account for; they made an occasion for discussing fashions in poetic diction. My class was clearly not up to placing the poem as a period piece, but more experienced groups might enjoy trying to stick one of the standard labels on it.

By comparing "The Star-Spangled Banner" with its ancestors, a student may possibly learn something about poetic fashions; he will certainly learn something about poetic values. Here is the last stanza of "To Anacreon in Heaven":

Ye Sons of Anacreon, then join Hand in Hand;  
Preserve Unanimity, Friendship, and Love!  
'Tis yours to support what's so happily planned;  
You've the Sanction of Gods, and the Fiat of Jove.  
While thus we agree,  
Our Toast let it be.  
May our Club flourish happy, united, and free!  
And long may the Sons of Anacreon intwine  
The Myrtle of Venus with Bacchus's Vine.

This is the fourth stanza of "Adams and Liberty":

While France her huge limbs bathes recumbent in blood  
And society's base threats with wide dissolution,  
May peace like the Dove, who returned from the flood,  
Find an Ark of abode in our mild Constitution,  
But though peace is our Aim,  
Yet the boon we disclaim,

If bought with our Sov'reignty, Justice or Fame,  
For ne'er will the sons of Columbia be slaves,  
While the earth bears a plant or the sea rolls its waves.

And this is the first stanza of "The Battle of the Wabash":

In the dead of the night, when aloud on the air,  
Through darkness the war whoop was heard fiercely yelling;  
Like lions just wild from the gloom of the lair,  
Our chiefs found the foe on their slumbers impelling:  
    While the mantle of night,  
        Hid the savage from sight,  
Undismayed were our warriors slain in the fight;  
But the laurel shall ever continue to wave,  
And glory thus bloom o'er the tomb of the brave.

The fact that all three poems were written to be sung and sung to the same tune suggests a special kind of comparison and another dimension in critical measurement. And the existence of a rival, "America," which, despite an act of Congress, half of my students thought was the national anthem, leads naturally to a comparison of theme, tone, and texture.

Considered quite by itself, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is a remarkably satisfactory poem for classroom analysis. It is sufficiently compressed and complex to tax the paraphrastic powers of the brightest freshman, but it is nowhere ultimately obscure even to the dullest. Its stanzas would be awkward to describe without the traditional algebraic system. Its meter is hard to scan but perfectly orthodox. It contains all the sound effects that a freshman needs to be familiar with and a few interesting metaphors as well. It is carefully and dramatically, though not obviously, organized. And finally—an important virtue pedagogically—it is not a poem of numbing or even consistent excellence. Few students will fail to see that Stanza III is inferior to the others and to agree with the general opinion that it ought to be omitted.

Most important, perhaps, "The Star-Spangled Banner" is hard enough so that the student must read it with dictionary and encyclopedia at hand, the best way to begin a poetic career, and yet easy enough so that it may be taught, efficiently and persuasively, by questions. I append thirty of these which taught my students something about poetry and persuaded them and me that all these years we have been singing a poem worth reading.

1. What does "spangled" mean?
2. What does "whose" (line 3) refer to?
3. What does "where" (10) modify?
4. What is the subject of "conceals" (12)?
5. What is the subject of "leave" (19)?
6. To whom does "you" (1) refer?
7. What times are involved in stanza I?
8. Why is the silence of 10 "dread"?
9. What is the time relationship of 13 and 14?
10. What is the time sequence, stanza by stanza of the whole poem?
11. What is the meter of 8?
12. Is it the fundamental meter of the poem?
13. How does 7 differ? The Greeks had a word, *amphimacer*, for this kind of foot: stress-unstress-stress. Do you find one in 7?
14. The Greeks called this kind of foot a *bacchius*: unstress-stress-stress. Are there any *bacchii* in the poem? Try 3 and 14.
15. Do you find much alliteration in the poem?
16. Is there anything unusual about the alliteration in 3?
17. What are the consonant relationships in 5? Are *ck* and *g* similar sounds? *t* and *d*?
18. Do you find much assonance? Analyze a line or two which seem especially assonant.
19. Does the poem contain regular inner rhyme? Irregular? Compare it in this respect with its predecessors.
20. Is there any relationship between rhyme and iambification?
21. Do you find any onomatopoeia?
22. The original manuscript has "through"

- in 1 crossed out and replaced with "by." Can you think of two reasons for this change?
23. All the manuscripts of the poem have "in" rather than "on" in 14. Which is better?
  24. Whenever Key revised or copied the poem he remained faithful to the singular "rocket's" and "bomb" of his original manuscript. Almost all printed versions have "rockets'" and "bombs." How do you account for this difference? Which number do you like better?
  25. All the late autograph copies of the poem have "clouds of the fight" in 3. The 1814 manuscript and most printed versions have "perilous fight." Which phrase do you think is better? Why?
  26. The present title of the poem seems to have been supplied by an early printer. Do you like it better than Key's original title? Why?
  27. Key might easily have written "star-studded banner" instead of "star-spangled banner." Which phrase sounds better? Which makes the more consistent image?
  28. What image do you see in "washed out" in 20? Is it appropriate for this scene?
  29. One stanza of this poem is usually thought to be unsuitable for a national anthem. What are the emotional qualities that might make it so? Does it have other defects?
  30. Key was a religious man; at the time he wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner" he was thinking of entering the ministry. Do the religious lines in Stanza IV seem integral parts of the poem, the natural development of what has preceded? Or do they seem forced and inconsistent? Compare the poem in this respect with "America."

### AMERICAN WRITERS AND THE PROFESSOR

JAMES WOODRESS

Who are the most popular American writers among the men and women best qualified to judge? Writers, critics, booksellers, and librarians have been polled, but there is one pivotal group of modest opinion-makers yet unreported: those who teach American literature from the college sophomore survey through the graduate seminar. Professors, it may surprise some to learn, like Faulkner twice as well as Hemingway, admire T. S. Eliot almost as much as both novelists combined, and for sixty years have generated a greater head of steam over Ralph Waldo Emerson than over any other literary figure from John Smith to John Steinbeck.

It may be argued, as Booth Tarkington once wrote Julian Street, that "professors don't know about writing. 'Literature' for them is a museum: they're curators and look after the dusting of classic curios . . . when they try to *make* opinions . . . they just gesture with their dust-rags." The teachers of American literature, however, do impose their views on impressionable undergraduates. One may be sure, for example, that the 42 professors who wrote

dissertations on William Dean Howells try hard to perpetuate the memory of that amiable author, though they are certain to be frustrated in after years when they meet former students who confuse Silas Lapham with Silas Marner.

For an extracurricular activity, I serve the American Literature Group of the MLA as bibliographer, in which capacity I recently compiled a list of all doctoral dissertations ever written anywhere in American literature. In this tabulation of 2,500 European and American theses lurk some fascinating facts—data illustrating trends and movements in literary fashion and data documenting the obvious importance of the U.S. in the atomic age.

The first thesis that the classification American literature can possibly be stretched to cover was produced at Cornell in 1891, a study of American English as spoken in Ithaca, N.Y. Three years later Yale accepted a bona fide topic—Longfellow—and the following year Johns Hopkins conceded that Franklin was worthy of graduate attention. Beginning with a scant nine titles written before 1900, the output

of theses in American literature has grown to flood proportions, and during the past year about 185 dissertations were accepted by universities from Berlin to Southern California.

Although Emerson is top dog in this compilation with 79 titles, Henry James trails by a margin of only one. This fact may not surprise editors, publishers, and teachers, but James's popularity never ceases to puzzle sophomores as they labor through "The Death of the Lion" in their survey courses. There is no question that James in another five years will forge far ahead. There have been 37 theses completed on him since 1950, and with an added 13 projects now in progress, there is no sign of a slackening off. Publishers who have James titles on their lists will do well to keep them in print. Emerson, on the other hand, is declining in popularity, having attracted only 18 thesis-writers in the past half decade.

This certainly is not true of Emerson's uncongenial neighbor Hawthorne, who finally is winning full recognition and soon will overtake his transcendental neighbor. The 71 Hawthorne titles, nearly half begun or completed since 1950, should give comfort to the "New Conservatives," who think they are alone in their interest in sin and guilt. Though his popularity now is faltering, Emerson had a ten years' start in the race. There was no thesis written on Hawthorne until he had been dead 41 years, and then the first doctoral candidate to explore this vital author took his degree at the University of Paris in 1905.

Next in the tabulation appear Melville and Mark Twain with 64 and 61 theses each. Even more than Hawthorne, Melville was a late starter, for no student found him worth attention before 1933. Since then, however, the activity has been furious. There now is a Melville Society to organize the guild, and production has been stabilized at a high level: 14 theses in progress. Yale is the center of this industry, having itself produced 15 of the 64 titles. Mark Twain, though he lived nearly two decades longer than Melville, entered this derby first. The initial study of him appeared in 1917, seven years after he died, and his popularity today is mushrooming. Since 1950 Twain has interested 33 writers, including one in East

Berlin, others in West Germany, Austria, and France.

Poe and Whitman, who rank sixth and seventh with 57 and 54 titles each, are staple items in the graduate school fare. Poe, of course, attracted a heavier percentage of the early students, and by 1930 his score stood at 25, to six for Whitman. Then in the 30's and 40's Whitman generated great enthusiasm while Poe slumped badly; but in the 50's the two have moved along together at a sedate pace. The Whitman centennial last year seems to have caused no new rash of theses, and Poe is doing as well as Whitman at the moment.

Although scholars make much of Whitman's international vogue, twice as many Europeans have written dissertations on Poe. In fact, 24 of the Poe titles were produced abroad, including three French medical theses (on such delightful topics as *Edgar Poe; un génie toxicomane*) and five studies written in Germany and France of Poe's influence on Baudelaire. Yet both Poe and Whitman were treated first in the U.S. in the same year, 1901, at Virginia and Cornell. Virginia, the center of Poe studies, has turned out eight dissertations on her distinguished alumnus.

That Howells in eighth place leads Thoreau, 42 to 33, may astonish non-academics. Even more startling is the news that Howells is likely to maintain this position indefinitely. The reason for his popularity must lie in his importance as editor, novelist, critic, his longevity, and his position at the core of American literature for 50 years. The Howells scholar studies not only a man but also a vital chunk of literary history. It is no wonder that there are five different inexpensive reprints of *The Rise of Silas Lapham* now available for collateral reading.

The apotheosis of rugged individualism, Thoreau, apparently receives more lip service than real attention from graduate students and teachers in this age of conformity. Though editions of *Walden* are plentiful, no American thesis-writer discovered Thoreau until 1928. The first dissertation actually was written in Heidelberg 26 years earlier, but Europeans admire him no more extravagantly than Americans and have written only five of the 33 titles. More than half of all the work on Thoreau has been done

since 1950; yet it looks as though Eliot soon will pass him. None of these facts, however, would interest Thoreau in the least, were he around today. In fact, he would be out picking huckleberries and not reading this essay anyway.

Eliot and Cooper, following in 10th and 11th places with 32 and 27 titles each, make an incongruous pair. Eliot is a fashionable author claimed by both American and English literature, while Cooper sometimes has seemed one of the freaks of literary history—an author of continuous popularity who could not write. All graduate work on Eliot has been done in the past ten years, and in another decade he will far outdistance Cooper; yet the first dissertation on Cooper was produced at Rostock, Germany, in 1899, and his creaky novels have inspired 14 titles since 1950.

The real flurry in the academic dove-cotes since World War II has been caused by Faulkner. Interest in him is tremendous, and at the rate he is going (22 titles since 1950) he is soon likely to challenge Eliot as the contemporary author most in vogue. Contrary to the general impression, however, this interest among graduate students is taking place mostly at home, for only three foreign dissertations (all in German) have been written on Faulkner to date, a negligible 13%. Dos Passos, on the other hand, who was first studied in Germany in 1930, has interested more European dissertation writers than Faulkner, but only a third as many Americans.

Immediately below Faulkner come Thomas Wolfe, Jonathan Edwards, Longfellow, and Lowell, tied with 20 titles each. Considering Longfellow's enormous reputation when graduate studies in American literature began, one is not surprised at his place, but it is equally clear that he has had his day. Nowadays graduate students unfashionable enough to write on Longfellow appear only once or twice a decade. Lowell, however, is still fairly popular, and Edwards is one of those perennial figures who will continue to attract occasional students, especially in schools of religion. Wolfe is the phenomenon in this group. Critics have been saying for 20 years that he was sure to go the way of the dinosaurs, but he has not. The Germans and Austrians, who love

him, have written seven theses about him, the French two, Americans nine (three still in progress). All this activity has taken place since 1948.

So far 16 writers have entered this recital, but still the list has not reached Hemingway. His newly conferred Nobel Prize status may improve his position, but the fact now is that this important author, with 12 titles, has managed to interest only two more students than Orestes A. Brownson. At this figure he is even with Willa Cather, one ahead of Whittier, Dos Passos, Frank Norris, and Stephen Crane, one behind Franklin, Ellen Glasgow, Jefferson, and Edith Wharton. One might think that Hemingway would attract as many thesis-writers as the squire of Yoknapatawpha County, but apparently with the men who know American literature best, it's Faulkner two to one.

At this point someone may be wondering where the other American-born Nobel Prize winners stand—Lewis, O'Neill, and Pearl Buck. The first two show up not too poorly, tying for 17th place with 18 titles each. The interesting thing about their reputations, however, is that they stimulate more enthusiasm abroad than at home. The first thesis on Lewis was written in Vienna the year he won the prize and 16 years before he became a respectable topic in his own country. In all, he has inspired 10 dissertations in German. O'Neill's reputation has flourished similarly: eight foreign theses, and the first in Vienna in 1928. But poor Pearl Buck never has managed to interest an American graduate student, though two Europeans have found her worth writing about.

Pearl Buck, moreover, is not the only American writer more honored in Europe than at home. In German, Austrian, and French universities interest in American authors has always been brisk, and more than two dozen important writers first were discovered in Europe. This list includes, besides those already cited, such persons as Emily Dickinson, Frost, Irving, Jefferson, Robinson, and Edith Wharton. Only in Austria has anyone ever thought Thornton Wilder worth writing about, and only in Germany has there ever been a dissertation on James Whitcomb Riley. At the same time, however, there apparently never has

been a thesis on American literature written in England. Only recently, with the establishment of a chair of American literature at the University of Manchester, has it been possible to study the literature of the U.S. in Britain.

There are still other curious facts detectable from the dissertation list. Among the 2,500 theses, which include six on Lafcadio Hearn, four on Dion Boucicault, and three on F. Marion Crawford, one might expect to find no writers overlooked by doctoral candidates. Yet some of the gaps are amazing. In many instances, of course, there have been excellent books written on authors never studied by graduate students and some writers not individually treated have been included in composite theses; but still it is surprising to find only four dissertations on Emily Dickinson (the first as late as 1940), only one on Paine as a writer, none on those interesting Puritans, Wigglesworth and Ann Bradstreet, none on the only good early American dramatist, Royall Tyler, none on Hayne or Timrod, despite the South's intense current interest in its own cultural history, and not even a title on Amy Lowell, Sara Teasdale, Marianne Moore, or H. D.

From this welter of statistics we can draw

several conclusions. The writer of a dissertation in American literature, who had trouble getting his foot in the academic door fifty years ago, now finds himself in vigorous competition with a host of colleagues similarly trained. Where it was barely possible in a few places in 1900 to write a dissertation on Emerson or Longfellow, today the situation is radically different. Doctoral candidates may explore almost any topic. There perhaps will never be a thesis on Edgar Guest, but Thorne Smith, Edna Ferber, Margaret Mitchell, *et al.* have been written on.

Finally, the steady climb of American literary scholarship toward respectability and abundance has paralleled almost exactly the rise of America as a world power. While scholars took 47 years (1891-1938) to produce the first thousand dissertations, they turned out the second thousand in 14 years (1938-1952), and probably they will complete the third thousand by 1959. Having had the pioneering aid of European students, American literature has become a major cultural export. It also is a domestic enterprise large enough today to need a warning against the dangers of a narrow parochialism.

### TEACHING *The Sound and the Fury*

MARTHA WINBURN ENGLAND

William Faulkner was photographed in the room where he wrote *A Fable* with the walls covered by the charted events of his mythic Passion Week. When I determined to teach *The Sound and the Fury* to a class of unselected freshmen, my method almost amounted to reconstructing those walls for the saga of the Compsons. The author did not intend that either book should be read within such a rigid chronological framework, and it is a dangerous thing to violate an author's evident intention. The Benjy section is not addressed to the rational mind but to the sense-perceptions, sharpening them in preparation for the demands to be made on them in a book where plot, character, and symbol are conveyed by sense impressions rather than by ratiocination.

Normal time sense has been distorted to set up the tragic rhythms of past and present that are the pulse-beat of Faulkner's tragic art.

It was, therefore, a violation of esthetic intent and artistic form to set a class to marking in margins the continuity of the separate events from a mimeographed table of dates and page-numbers. I set out in cold blood to ruin the Benjy section in the hope of making available the other three sections of the book. The almost sure gains from the rest of the book seemed an end that would justify the means for the present; and for the future, an increased ability to read the many modern authors who have adopted Faulkner's techniques seemed to provide an ultimate reward. As it turned

out, no apparent harm was done to the Benjy section, and the total gains from the teaching of the book were even greater than I had hoped. Five such classes have by now shown the same results.

Five class periods were given to the study. The work could be covered in four periods, but the harvest of serious observation of analysis and synthesis were very rich in that fifth session. The first period and part of the second were spent in the assigning of dates to the more obscure passages (pp. 48-49, 52, 57-59, 65, 70-71) by our joint consideration of various factors: ages and time intervals mentioned in recorded conversations, Roskus' rheumatism, the animals, and especially the weather.

The immediate reaction was a deep respect for the author purely as a craftsman, a conscious and clever artisan who had adroitly placed the clues for reading a work that had seemed chaotic. Then the relationship of his rhetoric to his inner purpose became clear; nowhere can it be seen more easily than in this section. Reproducing the thought processes of an idiot calls for a specialized rhetoric, and the dramatic situation clearly justifies rhetorical peculiarities. A glance at the Quentin section where abstract nouns occur in great numbers will show the contrasting omission of abstractions in the Benjy section, and the reason for the omission is obvious. Quentin's involved sentence structure contrasts with the predominant simple declarative form of Part One. Benjy does not question. He does not exclaim. Benjy does not use connectives that show logical processes of cause and effect, concession, purpose, or mental reservation, whereas the style of the rational man, Jason, should by definition be pervaded with constructions showing cause and effect. Benjy uses no subjunctives that show varying degrees of dubiety or acceptance of a fact. Benjy uses no literary allusions, whereas Quentin's words are weighted with them. Benjy's complete unselfconsciousness is made to include even sudden and violent physical pain, whereas Jason's absorption in self is shown rhetorically by his constant quoting of himself.

These simple matters of rhetoric, like the chronology of the book, are at once apparent to many readers, but some students lack the ability to read closely or the vo-

cabulary to argue directly from a text. In such cases, culpably impressionistic criticism may be a greater danger than the over-rational approach of making tables of the Benjy section and using it temporarily as a textbook of rhetoric.

Other more complicated stylistic comparisons were considered after the entire book had been read: the changes of speed, the alternations in speech rhythm, the typical figures of speech. But Benjy's rhetoric is easily analyzed, its qualities self-justifying. Faulkner's consistency is so impressive that the search for other consistencies became almost too absorbing. One student found a remarkably consistent system of color symbolism, the colors rarely mentioned but for the most part visualized from an object present in the scene. Another defended his conclusion that Caddy never tells the truth about even the simplest fact. This concentration upon ingenious workmanship rather than the glories of artistic genius is not the highest good, but it made a firm basis for enthusiasms that soon developed and it had the result of putting the class in position to sell Faulkner to me. My cold chronology had lowered the temperature of that passionate book to a point where it could be handled, but provoked more sensitive readers to a proper determination to bring things back up to the boiling point, and the class ran on its own steam, not mine. Students could and did read the rest of the book without interference and almost defiantly reread Benjy to synthesize what we had murdered to dissect. It seemed to me then and it still seems a testimony to the vitality of the book. Only a powerful book could survive such deliberate mishandling.

One could teach *Intruder in the Dust* or some of the short stories without taking such a risk, but pedagogically *The Sound and the Fury* has more to recommend it. It has not been part of secondary-school curricula. Its obscurity is so famous that students take an all-too-human pleasure in having read it. As for higher values, its very nature raises large questions about art. A communal reading of the Benjy monologue automatically raises questions that certainly should be discussed in the classroom. It raises, and raises fairly, the question of obscurity in literature, music, and

art. How difficult can a work of art be and still be worth the trouble? is a legitimate question. Where for me lies the point of diminishing returns? Is the point fixed, or can it be moved by discipline to include more complex works of art? And even if it can, why bother with this obscurity when one could read another novel by Trollope? In one instance a study of *Barchester Towers* had immediately preceded the study of Faulkner, making a contrast of the two imaginary "counties," one dark, one bathed in golden light, yet equally real. Once Faulkner followed *The Brothers Karamazov*. Each book presents its picture of an earthly saint and each has an early incident that serves as nucleus to the novel. Discussions of parallels and contrasts began at those points and gravitated toward the Grand Inquisitor and Easter in Jefferson.

Similar questions arise from the study of any great work of art, but *The Sound and the Fury* lends its own special urgency to the problems because it is the most famous book of our most honored writer. Magazines and television and the morning papers say it is important, and use it to make sweeping historical generalizations about modern art as opposed to the art of other eras, and they say it is a terrible book. And so it is. Literature in class and out will give knowledge of tradition and sensitivity to the world we live in; *The Sound and the Fury* serves both purposes well. It is so challenging that it forces young traditionalists to confirm their positions, and so terrible that young modernists must take thought in rallying to the defense of theirs. If Faulkner is to be taught, his greatest book is eminently teachable and eminently rewarding.

#### CHRONOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

##### *The Sound and the Fury* Part I ("April 7, 1928")

*Note:* Numbers in the margin indicate the order in which incidents are introduced. Probable dates of birth: Versh, 1888; Quentin, 1889; Frony, 1890; Caddy, 1891; Jason, 1893; Maury, April 1895; T. P., 1896.

<sup>1</sup>A partial chronology by Sumner Powell, *Perspective*, II (Summer 1949), 216-218, is less detailed and less comprehensive.

- |      |       |   |
|------|-------|---|
| 10   | 1898? | Death of Nancy (pp. 52-53) <sup>2</sup>   |
| 5    | 1898  | (Summer) Grandmother Bascomb's death (pp. 37-40, 42-47, 51-53, 55-58, 63-65, 80-81, 91-94).   |
| 1900 |       | Death of Grandfather Compson (Appendix, p. 7).  |
| 16   |       | Maury's name changed to Benjamin; heavy rain all that day (pp. 75-77, 80-91).   |
| 2    | 1903? | (December 23) Letter to Mrs. Patterson (pp. 24-28, 32).   |
| 11   | 1906  | Gift of perfume to Dilsey (pp. 59-62).  |
| 1907 |       | Mrs. Compson's mourning for Caddy's "death" (p. 247).   |
| 12   | 1908  | Caddy's affair with Charlie (pp. 65-67).  |
| 4    | 1908  | Uncle Maury's last letter to Mrs. Patterson (pp. 33, 62-63).  |
| 17   | 1909  | The Dalton Ames affair (pp. 87-88). <i>Note:</i> About the middle of August Mrs. Compson and Caddy go to French Lick where they meet Head. Quentin may go to Maine about the same time. In September he enters Harvard. |
| 1910 |       | (February) Caddy becomes pregnant.  |
| 6    | 1910  | (April 25) Caddy marries Head (pp. 40-42, 56-59).   |
| 13   | 1910  | (May) Benjy tries to reach the gate, but is prevented (p. 70).  |
| 1910 |       | (June 2) Quentin's suicide.   |
| 8    | 1910  | (June) Quentin's funeral (pp. 47-51).   |
| 1910 |       | (November) Caddy's daughter, young Quentin, is born. Later that year, or early in 1911, Luster is   |

<sup>2</sup>Allusion to the short story "That Evening Sun." Jesus, the husband of Nancy the washerwoman, apparently killed her with a razor. The Compson children were frightened by the ditch, which they had to cross in the dark while Jesus was hiding there. Later, the bones of some unidentified animal were "undressed" by buzzards in the ditch, and Caddy associates the two incidents. Her statement sheds light on her own character, not on any possible criminal past of the good Roskus nor on Mississippi methods of disposing of dead bodies. The short story is valuable especially for its dramatization of Mrs. Compson's callousness of that date—a callousness that was to turn malignant and destroy the family. Stephen E. Whicher has made some conjectures as to the origin of the bones, in *AL*, XXVI (May 1954), 253-255.

- born to Frony; Versh goes to live in Memphis.
- 14 1911 Benjy reaches the gate before T. P. catches him (pp. 70-71).
- 1911 Caddy is divorced by Head.
- 15 1911 Benjy is hit by Mr. Burgess (pp. 71-72).
- 1912 (April 26) Mr. Compson brings the baby Quentin to Jefferson.  
*Note:* Compare Appendix, p. 13.
- 7 1912 (May 22) Mr. Compson's funeral (pp. 47-51).  
*Note:* Prince, Mr. Compson's horse, is sold after his death. Apparently Fancy, the spotted pony, was not sold; Luster seems to remember Fancy. Queenie, the carriage horse, was still in use in 1928.
- 1913 Benjy is castrated.
- 3 1914? (Summer) Mrs. Compson and Benjy go in the carriage to the cemetery (pp. 29-32).
- 1920 Caddy's second marriage.
- 1925 Caddy's second divorce.
- 1920's T. P. goes to Memphis to live.
- 9 1920's Death of Roskus (p. 52). *Note:* The dog at this time is named Blue; in 1910-1912 the Compson's have a dog named Dan.
- 1 1928 (April 7) "Today" (pp. 23, 24, 26, 28-29, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 39, 40, 51, 54-55, 65, 67-70, 72-80 84-86, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92-93).

## Councilletter

THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLICATIONS REPORTS

MAX J. HERZBERG

Most important publication of the National Council this year is the third volume in the Language Arts Series—*The English Language Arts in the Secondary School*. Still to come are publications dealing with English teaching in the academic college and schools of education.

To the making of this new volume went the contributions of many teachers all over the country. The various chapters represent a consensus and not just a single person's viewpoint. Dr. Dora V. Smith feels that several of the chapters present material unsurpassed anywhere else in books or articles on their subjects; and I feel sure that her opinion will be echoed everywhere. The book is certain to take its place alongside the classic *Experience Curriculum*, prepared under Wilbur Hatfield's editorship, as a guide for secondary schools and for methods classes. Unstinted praise is due Dr. Smith and Dr. Angela Broening for the truly enormous amount of work they did in preparing this volume. Dr. Smith, on leave

of absence and a lecture tour abroad, was constantly in touch with all developments, reading proof assiduously from Singapore to London. Dr. Broening spent most of her days and probably a good many nights with the volume and conducted a fabulous correspondence. The Council owes both of them much gratitude for their devoted service.

Also published this fall is the latest edition of the reading-list for secondary schools, *Books for You*—a list which from the time the Council was founded has been one of its professional mainstays; orders for thousands of copies awaited its appearance. The sales of Council publications have in general been excellent and testify to the Council's high standing all over the country. We hope that our book on usage, now in preparation by Dr. James B. McMillan, will be ready for publication in the near future. Other projects are underway, but the Council is now ready for the proposal of new projects. Council Committees and members will, I hope, submit suggestions freely.

## News and Ideas

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN HOLD your job and still teach Chaucer's Miller's tale, the article by John O'Connor (Rutgers), in *Speculum* for January 1956, helps with the astrological background. The story becomes even funnier when we see the cuckolded carpenter not as a simpleton but as a conservative anti-intellectual who is duped in his pride into seeing himself as the confidant of Divine Providence, a second Noah, and the third father of the world.

A MOST HONEST AND EARNEST inquiry into the eternal problem of being a good teacher and yet "getting ahead" in our curious hierarchy comes from Bernard R. Schilling (Rochester) and appears in the Autumn AAUP *Bulletin*.

WHEN YOU ARE FEELING PUT down by having to teach 12-18 classroom hours a week, you might take some brief, grim consolation from considering a recent recommendation of the New York State English Council's Committee to Study . . . Grades 9-12: "that full-time English teachers be assigned a teaching load of four daily classes of approximately 25 students each and an overall teaching load of not more than 100 students a day." The next step, of course, would be to work toward a minimum load for college teachers of English.

"NEGLECTED BOOKS" AND "FAVORITE Books of Publishers and Editors" are topics of interest to teachers in the 25th anniversary issue (Autumn) of *The American Scholar*. The choices by English teachers of undeservedly neglected books are: John Ciardi (Rutgers) of Stanley Kunitz's *Intellectual Things* (verse); Leslie Fiedler (Montana) of Henry Roth's *Call It Sleep* (novel about a boy in Brooklyn); Douglas Bush (Harvard) of Hyder Rollins' edition of Shakespear's *Sonnets*; Howard Mumford Jones (Harvard) of Robert Field's *The Art of Walt Disney*; and—the most provocative—Lionel Trilling (Columbia) of Martin Schutz's *Academic Illusions in the Field of Letters and the*

*Arts* (Chicago, 1933), "a critical investigation of the methods of scholarship" in graduate schools. "It still seems to me," says Professor Trilling, "that Schutz's plan for graduate study in the humanities is the most intelligent I have ever come across, and entirely feasible."

QUESTION: WHAT DOES YOUR high-school literary experience have in common with that of current students? Answer: *The Idylls of the King*, presumably. In *The English Journal* for November, Warren Beck (Lawrence) peers through the "Clouds Upon Camelot" to suggest that they be dispersed and that students read Tennyson's lyrics instead. A good article for English teachers in general.

PURDUE'S MODERN FICTION STUDIES, whose first volume was mimeographed, is now beautifully printed and in hard-spine covers. The Autumn issue is devoted to Faulkner, following MFS's custom of concentration in Spring and Fall. The six articles are provocative—Robert Flynn's on "The Dialectic of *Sanctuary*" is provoking—but the best feature is Editor Maurice Beebe's checklist of Faulkner criticism, arranged by general and special studies.

"FREE COLLEGE EDUCATIONS Foreseen for U. S. in '75" is a Washington Post headline of early November. Seems that T. M. Stinnett of the NEA said so. That same week, according to a N.Y. Herald-Tribune editorial, Harvard—with an endowment of \$475 million—started looking for \$75-\$100 million more. President Pusey's campaign words are golden: "The first concern of any college should be its teachers. The future of the faculty depends not only on restoring the purchasing power of the professor's salary, say to that of the period of 1925-1935, but also upon the continuing creation of new professorships to keep pace with the advance of knowledge."

DO YOU HAVE STUDENTS WHO

want to go on in American Studies? Minnesota is offering \$2000-\$3500 fellowships for 1957-1958. Write now to the program, U. Minn., Minneapolis 14.

"THE U. S. INFORMATION AGENCY is seeking candidates for overseas posts as Cultural Affairs Officers, Information Officers, and Bi-national Center Officers. Only those with a record of achievement in public affairs, cultural affairs, including artistic and scholarly work, English-language teaching, or some medium of communication should apply. Age limits 31 to 55. Salary range \$5,700 to \$10,700, plus allowances. Candidates must be willing to serve anywhere in the world. Send for application forms and further information to Argus Tresidder, Cultural Affairs Advisor, Room 652 Walker-Johnson Building, U. S. Information Agency, Washington 25, D.C." Quoting this might be considered a public service, but any teacher considering these overseas posts should remind himself how much the American public needs him at home. \$5700-\$10,700, plus allowances, is a good range, to be sure, but just you wait!

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO wants not only a good chairman but funds for establishing a D. H. Lawrence Fellowship for writing and art at the Lawrence ranch near Taos, now the property of the University.

FREE TRAVEL TO EUROPE? YES, if you get and take along fifteen students for the summer. Write Universal Tours, 270 Park Ave., N.Y. 17—now, before all those staterooms, pensions, and Fiats are filled.

THE IOWA COUNCIL OF TEACHERS of English (32 OAT, SUI, Iowa City) has issued its yearbook, with articles on teaching loads, theme marking, and high school-college relationships in communications—the last by former NCTE President John Gerber.

HEMINGWAY'S USE OF SYMBOLIC characters in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" is convincingly discussed by William B. Bache (Purdue) in the Winter 1956, issue of *The Personalist*. Reminding the reader

that the purpose of the story is to express "the dilemma and insecurity of contemporary life," Bache points out that the young waiter represents youth, the older waiter, middle age, and the old man, old age. Taken together they form a composite symbol of modern man in his progress from youth to old age. The focus of interest is on the older waiter, who, because he can appreciate the views of youth and of old age, is thus the truest symbol of modern man "caught on the horns of the selfish and cruel materialism of youth and the insomniac nihilism of old age."

HAWTHORNE AND MELVILLE eventually rejected the idealistic societies depicted in *Typee* and *The Blithedale Romance* for basically the same reasons, according to Lillian Beatty (La Sierra College), writing in the Autumn issue of *The Personalist*. Both were convinced that ideal society cannot be built on the isolation of the individual from his own world; both had a Calvinistic sense of the power of evil and a realization that man cannot fight it without divine help; and both knew that intellect must not be glorified at the expense of heart. Thus, although initial impressions were favorable, they left *Typee* and *Blithedale* respectively, and when they came to write of their experiences, they showed their disillusionment.

HAYDEN CARRUTH TAKES A THIRTY-page look at Ezra Pound's life and works in the Summer issue of *Perspectives USA*, which Mr. Carruth helps to edit. The look is mostly perceptive, but Mr. Carruth sometimes lets his rose-colored glasses get in the way. Thus, many will agree that "Pound restored integrity to the language," but will disagree with Mr. Carruth's belief that to understand the *Cantos* a knowledge of languages is unnecessary and "a good memory" is helpful but not essential. Mostly, where this discussion sticks to Pound's poetic contributions it is a valuable study, but where it goes political it goes astray. Pound's own belief in his innocence is insufficient evidence on which to release him from the consequences of wartime broadcasts from an enemy country. If he is sane, let him stand trial, But above all, let us not, as Mr. Carruth apparently does, confuse

Pound's very real contributions to literature with his foolish attempts to glorify Fascism.

CHAUCER'S USE OF A COMMON medieval symbol for marital fidelity is discussed by John M. Steadman in the August *Notes and Queries*. The whelp that leads the poet to the knight in black in *The Book of the Duchess* is the same symbol of devotion that appears on a tomb in Gloucester Cathedral and in such later works as Pierus' *Hieroglyphica* and Alciati's *Emblemata*. In Chaucer's work, says Steadman, the symbol could have relevance for the poet, John of Gaunt, the deceased Blanche, or even all three.

FAULKNER BIBLIOGRAPHERS ARE in for a difficult time, according to H. Richard Archer in *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 3d quarter, 1956. Among the major problems are the numerous media in which Faulkner's work has appeared, the frequent revisions, the author's carelessness with manuscripts, and the ephemerality of radio and TV scripts, speeches, and material sent to friends. Mr. Archer concludes mournfully: "How can a bibliographer achieve success when his author has no respect for facts, chronology, or decorum? It leaves him to his own devices, and makes it necessary for him to discover and describe his findings without expecting verification or denial from Mr. Faulkner...." Skeptics will inquire wherein this situation differs from that of the bibliographer of any number of now-deceased authors, but skeptics and sympathizers alike will agree that Mr. Archer has stated his problems in a manner helpful to all would-be bibliographers.

HENRY JAMES APPEARS AS FORE-runner of soap opera in *Western Humanities Review* for Spring 1956. Winthrop Tilley (Connecticut) compares *The Spoils of Poynton* with NBC's *Young Widder Brown* and finds many similarities: action slowed to a snail's pace, domination by women characters, a nearly permanent situation of lovers separated by the minutest of feminine scruples, unceasing mental-analytical chit-chat, self-torture on the part of the heroines,

and above all, "Gallant Suffering." Mr. Tilley has something here; has anyone else ever tried to summarize the plot of *The Portrait of a Lady* or *The Wings of The Dove* for an unbelieving class of sophomores?

EVERY TEACHER WILL SEE SOMETHING of himself in "The Professor's New Overalls," a short story by Hollis Summers (Kentucky) in the Spring *Arizona Quarterly*. The chief character in this switch on the old fairy-tale is a professor who has no time to read the books he talks and writes about but keeps busy rearranging his "splendid quotations from himself."

SHERWOOD ANDERSON'S AMBIGUITY is viewed as the result of his temperamental, irresolute, moody personality in Bernard Raymund's "The Grammar of Not-Reason" in the Spring and Summer issues of the *Arizona Quarterly*. Also in the Spring issue Raymund reviews John Atkins' *Tomorrow Revealed*, which offers a satiric view of the next two thousand years based on a hypothetical reconstruction made from the novels of Wells, Orwell, Huxley, Bradbury and others which are supposed to have survived to the year 3700. Raymund acknowledges Atkins' ingenuity and blames the book's faults on Atkins' sources. Science-fiction buffs will doubtless agree that Raymund has only "dabbled" in the field; they might even say he knows as little about science-fiction as Mr. Atkins' hero.

TRUMAN CAPOTE'S TRIP TO RUSSIA with the *Porgy and Bess* company (*The New Yorker*, October 20 and 27) begins with the embarkation of the company from Berlin and ends with the opening night in Leningrad, December 26, 1955. The Russians found *Porgy and Bess* astounding and imaginative, but unpleasantly erotic. Capote found life in Russia difficult, terrifying, and expensive. Baby sitters cost \$7.50 a night and caviar does not come on every slice of bread.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD RENTED THE house owned by Andrew Turnbull's parents, and Turnbull recounts his warm friendship, as a child, with Fitzgerald (*The New Yorker*, November 17). Fitzgerald was

working on *Tender is the Night* at this time, but he still had time to play football with Turnbull and to charm the neighborhood children.

BING CROSBY HAS GIVEN \$160,000 TO his alma mater, Gonzaga University. The purpose of the gift? According to *Punch* (October 10), it is to house a collection of Crosby's movies and records.

"MILTON THE POET" WAS THE title of A. S. P. Woodhouse's Sedgewick Memorial Lecture at the University of British Columbia. The University has printed the lecture (price \$1), and it contains within a few pages one of the most sensitive, rich, and mature discussions of *Paradise Lost* that has yet appeared.

"STORM OVER CALIBAN, BY BERT Brecht," a proletarian version of *The Tempest*, appears in the September 12 *Punch*. It is by Geoffrey Gorre, not Bertold Brecht, and begins with Caliban, a huge, handsome, heroic Negro, singing "Work for Prospero, old man Prospero./He don't plant taters, he don't plant cotton./He just keeps raking it in." Ariel, in this version, is a despicable "Uncle Tom type."

THE PUNCH ALMANAC INCLUDES A 1957 calendar, each month consisting of "Leaves from Notable Old Diaries"—including those of Richard III, Hugh Gaskell, Raffles, Dr. Watson, and a Shropshire lad who records the daily suicides of the west country and his own attempts to enlist in the Fifty-third because he is keen about dying.

DYLAN THOMAS HAS RE-ESTABLISHED the popular oral tradition of great poetry, according to William Blissett (Saskatchewan) in the spring *Queen's Quarterly*. Blissett analyzes Thomas' "Fern Hill," and says that T. F. Powys (brother of John Cowper Powys) was a strong and as yet unrecognized influence on Thomas.

BERNARD SHAW, AS A MUSIC CRITIC, was not merely witty; here as elsewhere

(according to Carlyle King of Saskatchewan in the summer *Queen's Quarterly*) Shaw was a serious reformer who has appalled at the bad taste of performers and audiences. He fought for a hearing for Mozart's music when Mozart was all but forgotten; he blasted Mendelssohn's "kid-glove gentility" when Mendelssohn's popularity was at its height. Shaw called Brahms "brainless," and when he later revised his opinion he called his own former views "incredibly prejudiced and stupid."

"THE TURN OF THE SCREW" HAS demonstrable Freudian connections, after all, according to Oscar Cargill (New York University) in the Summer *Chicago Review*. Cargill supports Edmund Wilson's thesis concerning the psychopathology of the governess by pointing to Freud's case of "Miss Lucy R.," which appeared in Breuer and Freud's *Studien über Hysterie* only three years before the appearance of James's story. James's attention may have been directed to this early work of Freud's by the psychopathic symptoms of his own sister Alice, who had died a few years earlier. James's ambiguity, both within the story and in his later comments on the story, may have been caused by his desire to shield Alice's memory.

MILTON'S DAILY ROUTINE AS LAT-IN secretary to the Commonwealth emerges from the diaries of the German lawyer Hermann Mylius who had dealings with him in 1651-1652. J. Milton French (Rutgers), in the July *South Atlantic Quarterly*, deduces a vivid picture of Milton's daily chores of writing state letters, interpreting for his superiors at conferences, and reporting on subversive people and books brought to his attention.

*MURDER IN THE CATHEDRAL* IS REMARKABLY close to the extant historical documents which describe the events surrounding Thomas à Beckett's death. J. T. Boulton (Nottingham), in the spring *English*, feels that Eliot's adherence to his sources did not cramp the flow of his ideas, but rather released his imaginative energy for other important tasks in the play.

# New Books

## Anthologies and Texts for Reading

THE GROWTH OF AMERICAN LITERATURE, 2 vols., ed. Cady, Hoffman, and Pearce (American Book Company, 929 and 766 pp., \$6 per vol.). Professors Cady (Syracuse), Hoffman (Wisconsin), and Pearce (Ohio State) have entered the competitive field of American literature anthologies with some original and useful variations upon the norm of "anthologistics." Most noteworthy of these are the critical essays on the major novels, called "Notes on Reading," designed for the double purpose of avoiding inadequate selections from significant prose works (which presumably would be read in inexpensive supplementary texts) and providing well-written criticism to illuminate those works. Ours is an age of criticism, true, and these essays are of interest. A question in the minds of some prospective teachers, however, may be whether the student will tend to rely too heavily on the editorial opinions and a multiplicity of "interpretations." The value of these "Notes" will depend, of course, upon the level of the class and the predilections of the instructor. The dividing point between the two volumes always brings up certain problems. Here the Civil War, as is customary, provides the main division. Holmes and Lowell, however, slip a bit uncomfortably over into Volume Two along with the early "moderns." Mark Twain straddles the two volumes, appearing first along with the western humorists and again, in Volume II, with his later work. The editorial essay, "Notes on Reading Huckleberry Finn," appears in both. Whitman is placed in Volume II with the post-war writers where he limps slightly from the omission of the important Preface to *Leaves of Grass*. The general divisions of the text are, for the most part, simply convenient chronological sequences without much insistence upon intellectual patterns or social themes. Regional and "imaginative" themes dominate. Thus, "The Southern Tradition" and "The Western Spirit" form important sections whereas the older terms "Romanticism," "Realism," and so forth are

subordinated. Socio-political writing like that of Lincoln, Mrs. Stowe, and Whittier is not included. Volume II is strongly oriented toward the modern temper without much effort to characterize the interim periods. Recent literature is well represented and the text should appeal to those teachers who like to emphasize the present century. Poetry, fiction, and criticism are all fully illustrated, the principle being that of "coverage" of many figures rather than the masters-approach in which a few are represented in detail. In a word, this new two-volume anthology contains enough standard material to be well used in a survey course, and it contains new departures of special interest to those teachers with a regional or contemporary point of view toward the American literary scene.

ROBERT FALK

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES

THE CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY, Edith Wharton (Scribner, 1956, 594 pp. \$2.75). One of the best novels by one of the best novelists of the century is back in print after fifty years, in the Modern Standard Authors series, with a solid and provocative introduction by Blake Nevius (California).

THE COLLECTED POEMS OF W. B. YEATS (Macmillan, 1956, 480 pp., \$6). This is the Second Edition of 1950 transmuted into the Third and "Definitive Edition, with the author's final revisions." What these revisions are must be left up to the collators, but there is one new poem listed in the Contents—"The Hero, The Girl, and The Fool." Now for the critical and variorum editions!

THE SHORT STORIES OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY (Scribner, n.d., 499 pp., \$2.75). For a teacher, this is a rather annoying book—not because Hemingway is Hemingway, but because the sons of Charles Scribner seem to make their property more and more expensive and unavailable for col-

lege teachers and students, who, after all, are the very people who keep Hemingway alive. Where the short stories used to cost \$2.45 in the Modern Library—or was it back in the \$1.25 days?—and you got *The Fifth Column* thrown in, they now cost \$2.75, and you have very little of the Spanish War that produced Hemingway's best novel. In fact, if you want to teach this best novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, you can't, because you can't ask students to shell out the \$4.50 Scribner demands. And if you want to use Papa's most popular novels in a course—as most teachers of American literature across the country do—you will find them withdrawn from the \$1.45 Modern Library, and likely at any time to disappear as the 35¢ Bantam edition, with nothing else available for *The Sun Also Rises* except a \$3.50 job issued by the Sons, or their \$5

trade, \$2.75 text edition of *The Hemingway Reader*. (Although this has useless selections from five novels and two books of non-fiction, the fact that it contains *Sun* and *The Torrents of Spring* complete, plus eleven stories, makes it the best buy for a course than can spend an extended period on Hemingway.) Scribner will give you *A Farewell to Arms* in a text edition for \$1.75, but when students have to buy a sizeable number of books in a course and use each one only for a few class meetings, it's the paperbacks that are going to win out. Since Scribner protects Fitzgerald and Wolfe in the same way that it hedges in Hemingway (the latest 1956 *Paperbound Books in Print* lists only *This Side of Paradise* and *The Hills Beyond*)—this is to say that a lot of William Faulkner is going to be taught in the next few years.

### Recordings

HENRY L. MENCKEN, interviewed by Donald Howe Kirkley, Sr. (Library of Congress, 1956, PL 18-PL 19, 12-inch LP, \$7.50). This, the only recorded interview with the Bad Boy, is a wonderful document. Although it was taped in 1948, when Mencken was of course past his famous prime, the skillful questioning of Mr. Howe, an old newspaper friend of Mencken, elicited substantial and typical responses—

on the 1920's, the newspaper world, free speech, food and drink, and all the subjects that delighted the other renegades of the Sage's heyday. Mencken's ideas seem dated and limited today, but his untrammeled spirit and energy still live, in a high comic sort of way. Indeed, his voice sounds like W. C. Field's, and the whole performance inspires delight rather than assent.

### Composition and Communications

POWER AND SPEED IN READING, Doris W. Gilbert (Prentice-Hall, 246 pp., \$3.50). Intended primarily for use in twelve-week college or adult developmental reading programs, this workbook combines well-chosen selections and thought-provoking tests with a wide variety of drills and exercises. Mrs. Gilbert (Reading Improvement Service, University of California) is gifted with a lively style, unusual powers of organization, and a discerning knowledge of the principles of educational psychology. The long-range purpose of the manual is

"to increase total effectiveness both by improving the basic skill of reading and by developing . . . secondary skills." Emphasis is placed not so much on rate as on understanding. An attempt is made to instruct the student in the principles of effective reading, to broaden his vocabulary, and to increase his fund of general information. The book may attempt too much; teachers would need to select and prune.

Louis R. Ward  
Michigan State University

## Poetry

THINGS OF THIS WORLD, Richard Wilbur (Harcourt Brace, 1956, 50 pp., \$3). Not up to his two previous books, but still representative of one of the finest younger talents writing poetry today—Professor Wilbur of Wellesley. These poems are looser, less alliterative, and less witty, pos-

sibly the result of an attempt to expand and relax. Occasionally, as with the image of the abandoned mill-wheel, a poem will turn and turn in the mind over and over (as the last line has it), reminding the reader of this poet's unique power.

## Literary History and Criticism

THE NEW APOLOGISTS FOR POETRY, Murray Krieger (Minnesota, 1956, 225 pp., \$4). This is an important book; indeed when Mr. Krieger, who is an associate professor of English at Minnesota, is analyzing the theory of the "new criticism," his book is a basic one, just because he is about the first person to be critical and analytical (rather than polemical or hortatory) about the new criticism, and because he has enough training in analysis and history so that he can deal with the common assumptions of the critics in this tradition and not be misled by their doctrinal or dogmatic differences. Krieger begins almost from Coleridge's position; though, of course, since he is a modern critic, he wants to validate not his taste, but rather his way of "reading" poems. He uses as his text (in the homiletic sense and that of contemporary criticism both) Donne's "Canonization": by "reading" it he shows us "some of the complexities of poetic discourse for which the literary theorist must account." Thus his general problem is: "if our interest is to deal adequately with this sort of poetic experience [his way of reading a poem], then, in terms of this interest, what kind of object can be postulate which can facilitate this experience? what kind of creative process would be required to yield this kind of object? in what ways, *besides affording us our experience of it*, can we expect this kind of thing to function for us?" (My italics: I still cannot see why, when we are asking literary questions, affording an experience is not a sufficient thing for a poem to "do.") In one way or another, Krieger shows again and again, modern critics have used these questions to give some kind of paramount

authority to the meaning of poetry, if not to the statements of poems. He will have none of this; and indeed in his own theory, he thinks less about the supreme importance of poetry (as opposed to science) than about the common sense fact that poems are made up by men; and his basic question is (again he is like Coleridge and for the same reason—the absence of objective guarantees), what goes on in the mind when a poem is being made up. His answer follows Alexander's notion about the "impulse" in the author that is eventually satisfied by the completion of the word. Presumably that is too (possibly) physiological for Krieger. Instead he postulates the *telos* of the poem (p. 71n.) which is realized in spite of but also through and because of the intractability of language; struggling with language, the poet achieves a tightly organized structure in words, which has the nature of an organic situation because its parts point to each other "cross-referentially" and lose their meaning and life if they are torn apart and made to point "referentially" to the world outside the poem. I think this description of a poem and Krieger's analysis of the contemporary critical theory are the happiest parts of the book; I am less easy about his theory of value and rather uneasy about his account of the creative process; mostly, I suspect, because I do not always feel what he is saying.

WALLACE W. DOUGLAS  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

THE AMERICAN LYCEUM: TOWN MEETING OF THE MIND, Carl Bode (Oxford, 1956, 275 pp., \$5). The lyceum movement in the United States began in 1826 and, for all practical purposes, ended

with the Civil War. The "Millbury [Massachusetts] Branch Number 1 of the American Lyceum" was the first of several thousand similar organizations, but efforts to form a permanent national association failed. Very early, the original aim of mutual education gave way to random lectures on literary, philosophical, scientific, and related subjects; and after 1845 the chief feature of the movement was a kind of "star system" of lectures devoted as much to entertainment as to education. Professor Bode (Maryland) examines the development of the lyceum in each section of the country and points out the factors of population and physical environment that affected it. The chapters dealing with the relationships of lyceum, tax-supported school, and public library are particularly significant. Other chapters are concerned with the economics of the lyceum, with its impact on literature, and with some of the people—enthusiasts like Josiah Holbrook, lecturers like Emerson and Bayard Taylor—who created and maintained its popularity. Professor Bode's occasional lapses into academic jargon are more than balanced by the unobtrusiveness of careful documentation. His book is thorough, scholarly, and readable.

ARTHUR O. LEWIS JR.

THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY

**MARK TWAIN: SELECTED CRITICISM**, ed. Arthur Scott (Southern Methodist, 1955, 288 pp., \$5). Professor Scott (Illinois) has made a contribution to the helpful series of critical collections popular today by digging out three dozen reviews, essays, and chapters on Twain and putting them together, prefaced by a short but comprehensive survey of his reputation. It is interesting to note that the best chapters in this book seem to be those that tend to defend nobly or to probe painfully into Mark Twain's character and/or works: for the former, Howells, Phelps, Rourke, Calverton, Ferguson, De Voto, and Trilling; for the latter, Brooks, Mumford, Parrington, Wagenknecht, and Canby—in the particular inquiries here reprinted—even as in the two articles in the Oct. 1955 *College English*. Mark Twain seems to be then, now, and always, a controversial figure, and it is

good to have the opinions in a handy volume.

**THE STATURE OF THEODORE DREISER**, ed. Alfred Kazin and Charles Shapiro (Indiana, 1955, 303 pp., \$5). This is by far the best of the several recent critical anthologies centering on one writer. Every one of the thirty-odd items in the book is worth reading in its own right, and each is so arranged as to supplement another, thereby covering "the man and his work." Kazin's introduction, which isolates Dreiser's strange originality, is partially completed by the section of early newspaper reviews. The personal reminiscences are extended by the essays of "The Critical Battle": Kazin and Kern meet Shafer's humanistic attack and Trilling's liberal attack head-on, Bellow and Berryman express the con and pro of Matthiessen's reading of Dreiser; T. K. Whipple's brilliant essay (why is Whipple never mentioned these days?) expresses both sides. Finally, the special explanations of the major novels, plus a superb "selected" bibliography, make the book a fitting companion to Elias and Matthiessen. The printing and binding are first-rate.

**HEMINGWAY: THE WRITER AS ARTIST**, Carlos Baker (Princeton, 1956, 2nd ed., 355 pp., \$5). A new edition of the now standard handbook to Hemingway, by Baker of Princeton—new insofar that it adds a chapter on *The Old Man and The Sea* and a list of Papa's African articles since 1952. The new chapter seems much too long for Hemingway's simple, short novel, possibly because it is filled with literary references—some of them helpful, as with the comparison of Santiago and Manolo to Captain Beard and Marlow in Conrad's *Youth*, or the New Testament echoes, but most of them pretentiously irrelevant, as with the citations of Goethe, Schweitzer on Goethe, Wordsworth, Niebuhr, L. Housman on Wordsworth, Hazlitt, Whitman, Johnson, Yeats, etc. These references stick out like the raisins in bread (inorganic symbols) that Hemingway has deplored, yet in the long run the reader's reaction to them is doubtless a small price to pay for the facts and internal relationships revealed in this authoritative volume.

## THE MIDDLE GENERATION OF AMERICAN POETS

WILLIAM VAN O'CONNOR

In a country as big as ours the individual poet is usually on his own. He grows up in Baltimore or Long Beach, he reads in the local library or in his college library, and if he is lucky he finds a friend or an instructor who will listen to him or give him a few pointers. If he is very lucky he may attend college with a few other aspiring poets. This happened during the 1920's at Vanderbilt, and at Stanford during the 1930's. Common interests held the Vanderbilt group together, and apparently a strong-minded critic and poet gave some singleness of purpose to the Stanford group. Obviously this sort of thing does not happen often. If the poet develops alone it is only after he has achieved some recognition that he gets to know other poets. What I am working up to is a denial that our middle-generation of poets, those represented in George P. Elliot's *Fifteen Modern American Poets* (Rinehart Editions, \$1.65), can at all easily be considered a single group.

In terms of chronology, however, they seem to fall into three groups. Mr. Elliot has chosen to represent the work of the following: Elizabeth Bishop (born 1911), Richard Eberhart (1904), Randall Jarrell (1914), Robert Lowell (1917), Josephine Miles (1911), Howard Nemerov (1920), Hyam Plutzik (1911), Theodore Roethke (1908), Muriel Rukeyser (1913), James Schevill (1920), Delmore Schwartz (1913), Winfield Townley Scott (1910), Karl Shapiro (1913), Robert Penn Warren (1905), and Richard Wilbur (1921). The oldest of these poets was born in 1904, the youngest in 1921. This is quite a spread in time. There are those who first gained recognition in the late 1920's and the early and mid-1930's (these are Eberhart, Warren, and Scott); those who gained their reputations in the late 1930's and during the war years (these are Bishop, Jarrell, Lowell, Miles, Roethke, Rukeyser, and Shapiro); and those who emerged after the war (these are Nemerov, Schevill, Wilbur, and Plutzik).

I have a 1930 edition of Untermeyer's *Modern American Poets* and in this Warren is represented by several poems; his *Pondy Woods and Other Poems* appeared in 1930,

Eberhart's first book, *Poetry: A Bravery of Earth*, also appeared in 1930. I don't have exact information about Scott, but I have the impression that his work was appearing fairly early in the depression decade. Those of us who in the late 1930's read *The Southern Review*, *Poetry*, *Partisan*, *Sewanee*, *Kenyon*, and who watched out for the New Directions publications know that by the war years Bishop, Schwartz, Jarrell, Lowell, Miles, Rukeyser, Roethke, and Shapiro were fairly well established. After the war Richard Wilbur received a great deal of praise. Nemerov too, partly perhaps through whatever part he had in the monkey-shines connected with *Furioso*, as well as by his own achievements, became pretty well known. The remaining two poets, Schevill and Plutzik, were, I confess, unknown to me until I read them in Elliot's collection. I assume that Elliot has been asked more than once why he included Schevill and Plutzik and excluded So-and-So or So-and-So, but I don't believe we should quarrel with him about it. If they are as good as Elliot apparently believes they are, they will appear in later anthologies, and he will have done them and us a service.

Which brings us to another point. In the Untermeyer anthology (1930) one finds many poets who are no longer anthologized and who presumably are no longer read. There seems to be no good reason for listing them here. Who among these newer poets are most likely to last? If one dare to presume, how is one to decide? Many years ago, when they were both promising young poets, Wallace Stevens wrote to his friend William Carlos Williams and advised him (1) to find his own subject (2) to isolate his own quality, and (3) to produce and reproduce this quality in sufficient quantity. We may look into these three matters with some degree of objectivity, but obviously when we try to evaluate the quality of the individual poet we are trying to cross a high canyon on a shaky catwalk—and we can merely hope we get to the other side.

Since this latter judgment is so largely a personal matter, let me say that the poets in this group who have meant most to me

are Warren, Shapiro, and Roethke. Those of us who were in college or in graduate school in the late 1930's were likely to be latter-day children of Enlightenment or as we said—and the word vibrated with significance in those days of the New Deal—*liberal*s. As Mr. Trilling and others have pointed out, the word *liberal* implied a great many things, not the least of them an unquestioned faith in the possibility of a utopia. Mr. Warren's poems, with their old fashioned rhetoric, modified and made more immediate by an intermixture of contemporary diction, forcibly reminded one of some old-fashioned truths. The following passage, from "Original Sin," is characteristic:

Nodding, its great head rattling like a gourd,  
And locks like seaweed strung on the stinking  
stone,  
The nightmare stumbles past, and you have  
heard  
It fumble your door before it whimpers and is  
gone:  
It acts like the old hound that used to snuffle  
your door and moan.

You thought you had lost it when you left  
Omaha,  
For it seemed connected then with your grandpa,  
who  
Had a wen on his forehead and sat on the  
veranda  
To finger the precious protuberance, as was his  
habit to do,  
Which glinted in sun like rough garnet or the  
rich old brain bulging through.

But you met it in the Harvard Yard as the  
historic steeple  
Was confirming the midnight with its hideous  
racket,  
And you wondered how it had come, for it stood  
so imbecile,  
With empty hands, humble, and surely nothing  
in pocket;  
Riding the rods, perhaps—or grandpa's will paid  
the ticket. . . .

Warren was, and is, a metaphysical poet. He has also been an academic, and one finds echoes in his work from the poets of earlier centuries. Warren as a critic has become associated with the "earned belief." His own poems start an idea, pursue it, question it, allow it another chance to run, and then bring it to earth. With his rhetoric, his wit,

and his intellectual range, Warren has obvious links with certain of the Elizabethan poets.

Shapiro's subject matter, idiom, and mode of intellectualizing are very different from Warren's. His characteristic subjects are those of a person raised in a middle-class neighborhood of a large city. His idiom is indebted to Hart Crane, Louis MacNeice, and W. H. Auden, but the borrowings are thoroughly assimilated and made his own. Frequently Shapiro's tone is satiric, but usually it is of a gentle and amused sort, as in "Haircut":

O wonderful nonsense of lotions of Lucky Tiger.  
Of savory soaps and oils of bottle-bright green,  
The gold of liqueurs, the unguents of Newark  
and Niger,  
Powders and balms and waters washing and  
clean;

In mirrors of marble and silver I see us forever  
Increasing, descreasing the puzzles of luminous  
spaces

As I turn, am revolved and am pumped in the  
air on a lever,  
With the backs of my heads in chorus with all  
of my faces. . . .

Another important part of his subject matter is his love poems. In these he usually manages to catch the strange interplay between self and selflessness, between the tenderest sort of reverence and the rudely physical. They are caught for example in these two stanzas from "Love for a Hand":

Two hands lie still, the hairy and the white,  
And soon down ladders of reflected light  
The sleepers climb in silence. Gradually  
They separate on paths of long ago,  
Each winding on his arm the unpleasant clew  
That leads, live as a nerve, to memory. . . .

Quietly then he plucks it and it folds  
And is again a hand, small as a child's.  
He would revive it but it barely stirs  
And so he carries it off a little way  
And breaks it open gently. Now he can see  
The sweetness of the fruit, his hand eats hers.

Shapiro also wrote some of the best poems to come out of World War II. What struck me in first reading Shapiro, on the eve of the war, was that here was a "modern poet" (with all the associations that the Eliot and Auden generations had given that phrase) moving in the middle-class America

of automobiles, porch furniture, fat Sunday newspapers, or the college campus—somehow catching it both in its own terms and “distanting” it, as estheticians say, in the impersonal hardness of genuine poetry.

Theodore Roethke had to wait longer than either Warren or Shapiro for wide recognition. As he himself has said, he spent more years than anyone he knows of being one of the promising younger poets. But in recent years he has won many awards, including the Pulitzer Prize. Some of Roethke's earliest poems are epigrammatic, but even these have his characteristic intermixture of touching and gusty earthiness. Roethke's subject, if we may borrow from Yeats, is the slow music in the “blood and mire of human veins.” He is fascinated by man's relationship with the mole, with the breathing earth, with the slow ooze in dank cellars, and with the dark backwardness of unrecorded time. The following passage, which shows Roethke's manner, his kind of metaphor and rhythms, is from “The Lost Son”:

At Woodlawn I heard the dead cry:  
I was lulled by the slamming of iron,  
A slow drip over stones,  
Toads brooding in wells.  
All the leaves stuck out their tongues;  
I shook the softening chalk of my bones,  
Saying,  
Smail, snail, glister me forward,  
Bird, soft-sigh me home.  
Worm, be with me,  
This is my hard time.

Roethke's range in many ways is undoubtedly narrower than that of Warren or Shapiro. On the other hand, there may well be more intensity in Roethke's poems than in those of any of his contemporaries. Again, he does not seem to have been caught by the tricks or mannerisms of a period style, and one can imagine his being read and enjoyed in an era quite different from our own.

There are three women poets represented in the volume, Elizabeth Bishop, Josephine Miles, and Muriel Rukeyser. Back in the late 1930's, when one's politics had a lot to do with one's reputation, Miss Rukeyser was loudly acclaimed, and in the experimental and technique-conscious 1940's, it was Miss Bishop's turn to be acclaimed, mostly, if I remember correctly, because she seemed to

be a kind of reincarnation of Marianne Moore. But now, in the 1950's, when the poet's politics count for less, and the poet can be less *recherché*, it is Miss Miles who would seem most deserving of acclaim. Miss Miles is a poet of many skills. In “Sale” hears one of the rhythms of American life, a less ostentatious rhythm than, for example, one finds in Cummings:

Went into a shoestore to buy a pair of shoes,  
There was a shoe salesman humming the blues  
Under his breath; over his breath  
Floated a peppermint lifesaver, a little wreath.

I said please I need a triple-A  
And without stopping humming or swallowing  
his lifesaver away  
He gave one glance from toe to toe  
And plucked from the mezzanine the very  
shoe . . .

In poems like “Appointment in Doctor's Office” and “The Sympathizers” one finds a needle-like shock and poignancy somewhat akin to what one finds in Emily Dickinson. But I believe that if Miss Miles is read by later generations, as one hopes she will be, it will be because of her wonderfully quiet wit, as in “Reason” (originally from *Prefabrications*, Indiana University Press):

Said, Pull up a bit will you, Mac, I want to  
unload there.  
Said, Pull her up my rear end, first come first  
serve.  
Said, Give her the gun, bud, he needs a taste of  
his own bumper.  
Then the usher came out and got into the act:

Said, Pull her up, pull her up a bit, we need this  
space, sir.  
Said, For God's sake, is this still a free country  
or what?  
Said, You go back and take care of Gary  
Cooper's horse  
And leave me handle my own car.

Saw them unloading the lame old lady,  
Ducked out under the wheel and gave her an  
elbow,  
Said, All you needed to do was just explain;  
*Reason, Reason* is my middle name.

Two poets who have written admiringly of each other's work, although their idioms are very different, are Jarrell and Lowell. Both have been closely associated with the magazines that have been edited by Warren, Brooks, Ransom, and Tate. Both have

also contributed to the *Partisan Review*. In the 1940's anthologists trying to represent the recent young poets usually printed Shapiro, Jarrell, and Lowell.

The early work of Jarrell was determinedly avant-garde and modernist, and in the preface to his own poems contributed to a New Directions volume, *Five Young Poets* (1940), he wrote a manifesto that is likely to be referred to for many years to come by literary historians trying to describe the American poetry that has been deliberately obscure, filled with tag ends of erudition, and idiosyncratic. But the later Jarrell is much more relaxed. For my tastes this later work is much too wordy—and by wordy I don't mean rhetorical. His best poems, I think, are those he wrote while in the Army, those poems that catch the sense many soldiers had of being cut off from affection, without the necessary resources that would allow one a sense of personal dignity, of being nonentities. One of the best of these poems, which is not in *Fifteen Modern American Poets*, is "The Sick Nought":

Do the wife and baby travelling to see  
Your grey pajamas and sick worried face  
Remind you of something, soldier? I remember  
You convalescing washing plates, or mopping  
The endless corridors your shoes had scuffed;  
And in the crowded room you rubbed your cheek  
Against your wife's thin elbow like a pony. . . .

Lowell's poetry is a kind of throwback to seventeenth-century New England, guilt-ridden and determinedly devotional. The emotions in the poems are somehow heavy and cold, and the language is sometimes impenetrably obscure. Lowell, I suspect, will never be a poet for the general reader. He will be read—perhaps one should say studied—by those who not only do not object to, but who enjoy, looking into the volumes on their reference shelf.

Richard Eberhart and Delmore Schwartz are both poets who have earned their reputations, but they do not seem to me to write the sort of poetry, as for example Roethke and Miss Miles do, that is truly a revelation. One is willing to pay them homage, and it is a pleasure to read their poems in an anthology. But it is the homage one pays to knowing intelligent craftsmen. Winfield Townley Scott is not so knowing a crafts-

man. He reminds one of Edgar Lee Masters, with the same eye for lonely and frustrated people, for human grotesques. He also reminds one of Sherwood Anderson and of those American romantic-realists who through their writing sought to assuage their sense of lostness and their suffering, and who seemed to say that even if writing could not do this they were at least bearing witness to the sad facts of lostness and suffering.

And what of Plutzik and Schevill? Plutzik's Muse is angry and too often explodes in ejaculations like "victory! victory! victory! Victory!" Jewishness is a part of his subject-matter, and he seems a little obsessive about it. Jewishness is also a part of Shapiro's subject-matter, but he controls the subject. In comparing the two poets one is reminded of Joyce's distinction between *static* art and *kinetic* art. However, Plutzik has in addition to his vigor the capacity to strike off a fine phrase. The subject that is behind most of Schevill's poems is the nature of human identity. He has a nice sense for the fanciful and yet a hard sense of fact, and the two things sometimes help inform his poems with a touch of eeriness and mild comedy.

And this brings us to the last, and two of the youngest, of the Middle Generation Poets, Nemerov and Wilbur. There is little that is difficult or obscure in Nemerov's language, and he is a finished writer. On the other hand, he does not seem to me to be sufficiently idiosyncratic. In "The Goose Fish" and "A Chromium-Plated Hat: Inlaid with Scenes from Siegfried" there is a humorous manner that is rather different from the manner of the other poems. Those who know Nemerov's work as a whole may have reason to disagree with me, but the poems reprinted in this volume suggest that Nemerov does not as yet have a unified quality immediately recognizable as his own. Richard Wilbur, on the other hand, has a quality that is unmistakable in poem after poem. He has as much virtuosity as Swinburne, but in addition he has restraint and humor, as in "Marché aux Oiseaux":

Hundreds of birds are singing in the square.  
Their minor voices fountaining in air  
And constant as a fountain, lightly loud,  
Do not drown out the burden of the crowd. . . .

We love the small, said Burke. And if the small  
Be not yet small enough, why then by Hell  
We'll cramp it till it knows but how to feed,  
And we'll provide the water and the seed.

Since this volume is a textbook and does present fifteen middle-generation poets for academic study, what sort of a judgment should one pass? A very few years ago some of these poets were undergraduates or graduate students, and now they find themselves, whether willingly or willy-nilly, asking that a place be found for them in

the hierarchy of English and American poetry. Just back of them is the generation of Yeats, Eliot, Stevens, Frost, Hart Crane, and Ransom, and we commonly say that in them we have had a poetry renaissance. One might feel that it is presumptuous even to compare these more recent poets with their eminent elders. I do not believe it is. In another quarter or half century, when all of them, elders and juniors alike, are in the dust, probably four or five of these fifteen poets will be found alive-on-the-page of anthologies and text-books.

## A SURVEY OF SHORT-STORY TEXTBOOKS

MAURICE BEEBE

Let us admit first of all that the only real test of any textbook is in the classroom and that, once there, the book's effectiveness depends not on itself alone, but also on the teacher, the students, the hour of the day, the pleasantness of the surroundings, and countless other variables. A book used successfully by one instructor is a failure with another; a teacher with two sections of the same course finds that one class embraces the textbook, the other class fights it. Some instructors prefer a book made up entirely of familiar classics; others want a predominance of fresh, newly anthologized stories. One teacher wants a book with no critical apparatus; his colleague wants as much critical apparatus as possible, if only to refute it. When we consider such additional variables as price, format, number of stories, geographical and temporal range, level of difficulty, and principle of arrangement, the choice of the best book for a particular course becomes no simple matter.

There are about forty textbook anthologies of the short story currently available—enough, surely, to serve almost any purpose and to please almost any taste. With hundreds of good, teachable short stories available, it is difficult to understand how any editor could go completely wrong, and few of them have. Assuming that the teacher is competent and the students responsive, any book will work. I think that we can agree, though, that, everything else being equal, some books work better than

others and that we are justified in trying to judge one book against another. My primary purpose in this survey is to set up a few standards and classifications that may help other teachers narrow their selection of a suitable text from the many currently on the market to the several which are best adapted to the particular course situation and the teaching approach favored by the instructor. Since the problem is one of evaluation as well as classification, I shall have to reveal some personal convictions which I realize are not shared by all teachers of fiction.

My main criteria are price, the selection of stories, adaptability to separate types of courses, and the amount and quality of critical or instructional matter included in addition to the stories. As far as the first of these is concerned, we have ample choice: prices range from thirty-five cents to five dollars, and the cost-per-story varies from a penny to twenty cents. Most instructors will want to make sure that the more expensive volumes are worth the extra cost, and if two books are found to be otherwise comparable, the nod may well be given to the less expensive on a cost-per-usable-story basis.

Whereas we can easily determine the comparative costs of textbooks, there is no sure way of comparing the selection of stories. Although most of us will assume that freshmen should read less complex stories than upperclassmen, there is surpris-

ingly little difference in level of difficulty among most collections. A few of the older texts now seem to be quaintly out-dated in the authors represented, the books aimed at creative writing courses often include commercial stories, and though some editors are concerned more with technical aspects than with subject-matter in choosing stories, others prefer stories with thematic and social significance. Despite these exceptions, the majority of editors seem to strive for a variety of story types important both thematically and technically and ranging from easy to difficult. Thus, once the teacher has found the collections most appropriate in type for his course, he will want to make his own choice of the section with which he feels most at ease and then test it in the classroom.

Even here, though, I think that the teacher can apply several standards before he commits himself to a definite choice. A glance at the table of contents will reveal how many of the leading writers of fiction are represented and by what stories. Too often major writers are represented by their most minor stories. For instance, I am immediately prejudiced against a book which offers only the inferior "Paste" as its James story (thus subordinating James to Maupassant) or "Turn About" as its Faulkner. Another standard is the academic and critical reputation of the editor: has he attained recognition as a critic whose choice may be trusted? Freshman students are not likely to care whether their text is edited by Bennett Cerf or Allen Tate, Harry Shaw or Mark Schorer, but the teacher who has professional pride *ought* to care. It is no coincidence, I think, that those compilers of short story anthologies who have previously shown their disinterested devotion to literature seem to put more work into their books than do those who can be moved to publish only in the hope of paying off the mortgage or replacing the old jalopy.

As for the problem of familiar stories versus fresh ones, we ought to make a distinction between classics and chestnuts. The stories most often discussed—stories like "The Turn of the Screw," "The Bear," "Billy Budd," and, in spite of Brooks and Warren, "The Fall of the House of Usher"—are in a sense the freshest of stories simply because they obviously may be seen

in many different lights and even yet have not given up all their secrets. The chestnuts are those stories which—like "Haircut," "The Necklace," and "The Furnished Room"—give up all their secrets on an initial reading and hence require as little classroom discussion as they have evoked published criticism. I see no objection to a text made up primarily of classics. However, since most textbooks are compiled by teachers on the basis of their experience with other textbooks, a great deal of inbreeding takes place. If only to freshen the breed, as well as to prod the jaded instructor, editors ought perhaps to include at least a few stories not previously anthologized which they feel are deserving of serious consideration.

When we apply the standard of adaptability, we note that one failing of short story texts as a group is the lack of books designed specifically for single types of courses. Most of them are multi-purpose anthologies, and cross-breeding is as much a fault of the group as inbreeding. "This anthology," begins one preface, "has been designed for courses in Introduction to Literature, Freshman English, Critical Reading, the Short Story, Modern Fiction, and Creative Writing." A book suitable for all these of courses is probably not the *best* book for any one of them.

Only two types of courses, creative writing and the history of the short story, have books designed primarily for them. The creative writing teacher who wants a single textbook combining manual and anthology has a choice between Richard Summers' *Craft of the Short Story* (Rinehart, 1948, \$5) and Lillian Gilkes and Warren Bower's *Short Story Craft* (Macmillan, 1949, \$4.25), both of which contain about the same number of stories (26 and 27 respectively) with about the same proportion of "slick" to quality stories. The Summers text contains a 130-page introduction consisting largely of practical instruction on the writing of fiction, study questions for each story, and appendices on literary agents, markets, the preparation and proofreading of manuscripts, and the like. Miss Gilkes' introduction to short story writing, more critical than the instructional portion of Summers' book, is followed by Bower's "Memo from the Editor's Desk," a discus-

sion of what makes a story unsalable; and the lack of study questions and marketing hints is partly offset by biographical sketches and a list of suggested readings in the modern short story. The instructor who prefers either a separate writing text or none at all or who follows the Ivy League policy of making no compromise with the "slicks" may decide to pass up these two books in favor of a critical anthology. Of the many books in this category, discussed below, two that are especially appropriate for the creative writing course are the Gordon and Tate *House of Fiction*, with its critical commentaries and its appendices on the techniques of fiction and the faults of the amateur writer, and the Stegner-Scowcraft-Ilyin *Writer's Art*, which contains sound analyses by the editors and six essays by leading writers tracing the evolution of their stories.

For courses in the history of the short story, several adequate books are available. Henry Seidel Canby and Robeson Bailey produced in 1948 a "new and enlarged edition" of the long standard Canby and Jessup *Book of the Short Story* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, \$3). The new edition contains 27 classic stories international in scope and ranging in time from about 2500 B.C. to 1938. The editors supply a two-part introduction on the history of the short story, biographical and critical headnotes, and perhaps the longest chronological list of representative short stories and tales to be found in any anthology-text. Now that E. A. Cross's excellent *Book of the Short Story* (American Book, 1934) unfortunately has been discontinued, Harold Blodgett's *The Story Survey* (Lippincott, rev. ed., 1953, \$4) has the field of the larger, omnibus-like text pretty much to itself. The bulky volume contains 64 stories arranged chronologically and divided into American, English, and Continental groups, an appendix on the technique of the short story, a bibliography of criticism, and rather undistinguished study questions. In making his recent revision, the editor failed to take note of changing critical reputations, retained a number of not quite first-rate stories by forgotten writers as well as minor stories by major authors, and simply added three "new" stories by Fitzgerald, Wolfe, and Damon Runyon. Instead of bringing the book up to date, the revision only makes it

seem more out-dated than ever.

Although Cynthia Ann Pugh's *A Book of Short Stories* (Macmillan, rev. ed., 1941, \$3.90) contains a section of English and European stories, its main emphasis is on the American story (24 out of 36). Editorial material includes an introduction on the history of the short story, biographical notes, and a list of reference books and short stories. More useful than its old-fashioned format would suggest, this book has nonetheless become superseded by the more recent *American Short Stories: 1820 to the Present* (Scott, Foresman, 1952, \$2.75), edited by Eugene Current-Garcia and Walton R. Patrick. It contains 40 stories, including a good representation of contemporary ones, an introduction tracing the history of the American short story, and biographical-critical notes for each author. A compact and attractive volume, it seems well worth the modest price asked by the publisher. Another collection of American short stories is that edited in four paper-bound volumes by Maurice C. Baudin for the Liberal Arts Press's American Heritage series. *Representative Short Stories of the Nineteenth Century* (75¢) contains an introduction and ten standard stories; three volumes of *Contemporary Short Stories: Representative Selections* (85¢, \$1, \$1, or \$2.50 the set) contain an introduction and a total of thirty-two stories by as many authors. Although the selection is not so distinguished as that made by Current-Garcia and Patrick, the separate volumes in Baudin's series are useful as supplementary texts for the survey course in American literature or the course in the American novel.

The multi-purpose texts may be divided into plain anthologies, readers with accompanying teacher's manuals, and anthologies with critical material in the text. Although the reader without critical apparatus has its uses in the classroom, especially when only a supplementary text is desired, my own feeling is that a textbook ought to help the teacher teach. The more material we can put into the hands of our students, the less we have to tell them and the more time we can devote to discussion of the important and difficult problems. Although asking students to read analyses or to answer study questions removes a

certain spontaneity and freshness of response from the discussions, my experience is that students tend to talk better and more to the point if they can come to class prepared with some notion of the problems most likely to be discussed.

For all that, many teachers want no interference from the textbook. And for these teachers a number of adequate readers are available. Listed in order from lowest to highest cost-per-story, ten of the better-known are Milton Crane, *Fifty Great Modern Short Stories* (Bantam, 50¢); Robert Penn Warren and Albert Erskine, *Short Story Masterpieces* (Dell, 50¢, 36 stories); M. E. Speare, *The Pocket Book of Short Stories* (35¢, 22 stories); C. L. Cline, *The Rinehart Book of Short Stories* (65¢, 18 stories); Charles Neider, *Great Short Stories from the World's Literature* (Rinehart, \$2.90, 45 stories); Harry Hastings, *The College Short Story Reader* (*Odyssey*, \$2.25, 30 stories); William T. Hastings and Benjamin C. Clough, *Short Stories* (Houghton Mifflin, \$2.75, 36 stories); Bennett Cerf, *Great Modern Short Stories* (Modern Library Paperback, 95¢, 18 stories); Harlow O. Waite and Benjamin P. Atkinson, *Stories from Literature for Our Time* (Holt, \$1.95, 21 stories); and Dorothy Brewster, *Book of Modern Short Stories* (Macmillan, \$2.95, 29 stories). All but one—the text edited by Harry Hastings—are paperbound. Except where the titles indicate otherwise, they are international in scope and are made up dominantly of well-known stories of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Most of them contain brief biographical notes. Of the least expensive volumes, I would choose the Warren and Erskine selection over the Crane and Speare collections; and of the others, my favorite is Neider's *Great Short Stories from the World's Literature*, partly because it contains more classics and fewer chestnuts than most of the others and because it devotes more space than is usual to translated stories.

The text with separate teacher's manual is, I think, at best an unhappy compromise between the mere reader and the critical anthology. The usual objection to apparatus in the textbook is that it takes too much away from the instructor—"steals his thunder" is the common phrase—and makes it difficult for him to fill his fifty minutes.

But since most of our thunder comes from outside anyhow, we may as well let our students hear it too. If the stories are well chosen, no amount of critical analysis will exhaust them; if the stories can be exhausted, the textbook had better be replaced. The teacher who prefers his own interpretations to those of the editor may nonetheless allow his students the choice of two points of view. Although some publishers will supply manuals for distribution to students—at a cost of from twenty-five cents to a dollar each—we may as well choose in the first place a book with student-oriented apparatus in the text itself. Finally, there is the matter of cost: if we compare the prices of books with accompanying manual to the prices of the readers mentioned above, we discover that the teacher who uses a book with manual is, in most cases, actually asking his students to pay a disproportionate amount so that he may have the privilege of using a crutch.

Despite this, I would insist that a book with accompanying manual is better than a textbook with no critical apparatus at all and that the eight books in this category are, generally speaking, more carefully and critically edited than the group of plain readers. Three of the books are especially useful for the freshman English or introduction to literature courses. Herbert Barrows' *15 Stories* (Heath, 1950, \$1.75) is a well-balanced collection of stories that prove especially rewarding for classroom discussion. The revised version of Walter Havighurst's *Masters of the Modern Short Story* (Harcourt, Brace, 1955) is available in two editions: a 15-story paperback edition priced at \$1.90 and a 24-story cloth-bound edition priced at \$3. The third edition of Raymond W. Short and Richard B. Sewall's popular *Short Stories for Study* (Holt, 1956, \$3.25) contains 23 stories, most of them classroom-tested in the earlier editions. Whereas the Havighurst collection is arranged in terms of related themes, the Short and Sewall maintains an easy-to-difficult progression that makes the book especially appropriate for the introductory course. I think that the stories in Short and Sewall are of higher quality, though some teachers will feel that this is a disadvantage in freshman English and may prefer Havighurst's selection because of its em-

phasis on short stories as a means of understanding "human problems" rather than purely literary ones. Short and Sewall's teacher's manual, like the text itself, has had the advantage of two revisions since the original edition and, like the manual written by Barrows, is generally more perceptive critically than Havighurst's.

There is little to distinguish between William M. Sale, Jr., James Hall, and Martin Steinmann, Jr., *Short Stories: Tradition and Direction* (New Directions, 1949, \$3, 24 stories); Marvin Felheim, Franklin B. Newman, and William R. Steinhoff, *Modern Short Stories* (Oxford, 1951, \$3.50, 25 stories); Royal A. Gettman and Bruce Harkness, *A Book of Stories* (Rinehart, 1955, \$3, 28 stories); and Jack Barry Ludwig and W. Richard Poirier, *Stories: British and American* (Houghton Mifflin, 1953, \$3, 30 stories). The Sale-Hall-Steinmann and Ludwig-Poirier selections are grouped roughly by historical periods; Felheim-Newman-Steinhoff, restricted to stories of the twentieth century, is arranged in terms of increasing complication and related themes; Gettman and Harkness place their stories in unobtrusive clusters related to major aspects of the art of fiction—theme, plot, point of view, symbolism, and total meaning. But since all four of these books are flexible enough to be adapted to various teaching approaches and the stories are of much the same high level, the teacher may want to choose between them on the basis of their special features. The best of the teacher's manuals is the one written by Sale, Hall, and Steinmann; Ludwig and Poirier include two long and perceptive critical analyses in the text itself; Gettman and Harkness offer materials for a source study of Conrad's "Secret Sharer" and include three especially rewarding longer selections—Dostoevsky's "Grand Inquisitor," Porter's "Noon Wine," and Melville's "Billy Budd."

Robert Gorham Davis's *Ten Modern Masters: An Anthology of the Short Story* (Harcourt, Brace, 1953, \$3.25) deserves a place to itself among the anthologies with accompanying manuals. This unique text contains three stories by each of nine major writers—Anderson, Faulkner, Hemingway, James, Lawrence, Mann, Mansfield, Frank O'Connor, and Welty—two short novels by

Conrad, and single stories by three earlier masters that may be used for comparison and contrast. The fact that leading writers are represented by more than one story allows for a greater emphasis upon the development of individual talent and for comparisons between authors rather than stories alone. The teacher's manual is genuinely helpful; and the text includes an appendix of short selections by the writers on the nature of their art and, like all the other books in this category, biographical notes. It is in many respects the best of the books with accompanying manuals, if only because it can make some claim to originality.

Despite my belief that the books with separate manuals are inferior as a group to those with instructional and critical aids in the text, *Ten Modern Masters* seems to me a more distinguished book than some of those which combine stories and apparatus in the same volume. One of two sub-standard works in this category, Woodburn O. Ross and A. Dayle Wallace's *Short Stories in Context* (American Book Company, 1953, \$2.85, 20 stories) fails only because it attempts too much, if not the impossible. In obvious rebellion against the Brooks and Warren type of critical reader, the editors of the book try to replace the usual critical apparatus with short, encyclopedic descriptions of the authors' lives and personal philosophies, which they consider the "context" for the understanding of the stories. Because this principle is one in which I can see merit, I regret that the editors, obviously pressed for space, have had to over-simplify their expositions to such an extent that they often seem to have worked backwards from story to writer. The result is a dangerously over-simplified and not very scholarly method of analysis which only succeeds in making the writers represented seem less intelligent than they are. There is a greater proportion than usual of stories with social and didactic significance, and though some "literary" stories are included as well, Gertrude Stein's "Miss Furr and Miss Skeene" seems to be included only as a means of making fun of "arty" fiction. For the teacher who wants an anti-critical reader, here is the book.

The other sub-standard critical text in my opinion is *Reading the Short Story* (Har-

per, 1954, \$2.50), Harry Shaw's revision of an earlier book edited by Douglas Bement. The book contains brief and sketchy analyses, study questions, biographical notes, and an introduction on the art of fiction. The stories—Kipling to Capote—are arranged arbitrarily, restricted to American and English authors, and include a disproportionate number of "slick" level stories. The book as a whole seems to me a low-paced, "layman's" text which, despite the recent revision, is out-dated in both story selection and critical apparatus.

Three critical anthologies which contain analyses or study questions but which are less editorially controlled or schematized than most of the others in this group are Winifred Lynskey's *Reading Modern Fiction: 30 Stories with Study Aids* (Scribners, 1952, \$2.50); Wallace Stegner, Richard Scowcroft, and Boris Ilyin's *The Writer's Art: A Collection of Short Stories* (Heath, 1950, \$3, 17 stories); and Jarvis Thurston's *Reading Modern Short Stories* (Scott, Foresman, 1955, \$2.75, 43 stories). Each has its distinctive merits. The Lynskey is a well-balanced selection of stories ranging in difficulty from S. V. Benét's "A Tooth for Paul Revere" to James's "The Bench of Desolation," all of which are followed by suggestive analyses and questions that open avenues of investigation without closing them. The complete absence of a schematized order—the stories are presented alphabetically by author—makes the book appropriate to the multi-section course for which adaptability to varied teaching approaches is desired; on the other hand, the lack of a progressive ordering of the stories may seem a disadvantage to those of us who prefer a greater degree of editorial control. The Stegner-Scowcroft-Ilyin text, which seems to be aimed partly at the high-level creative writing course, is divided into two sections: "the story from without," eleven stories accompanied by good analyses; and "the story from within," six stories accompanied by their authors' explanation of how the tales evolved. Thurston's text, ordered from easy to difficult, has the advantage of a greater number of stories from which the instructor may choose, and though the volume contains only three analyses in addition to an excellent introduction on the art of fiction, the editor supplies both a

general bibliography of fiction criticism and shorter lists of explications for the individual stories.

The selections in Robert B. Heilman's *Modern Short Stories: A Critical Anthology* (Harcourt, Brace, 1950, \$3, 29 stories) and James B. Hall and Joseph Langland's *The Short Story* (Macmillan, 1956, \$3, 34 stories) are grouped to illustrate certain aspects of fiction. Hall and Langland's division into primitive fictions, developments in narration, doctrinaire approaches, gothic and fantastic modes, psychological approaches, the world of manners, and integration of symbol is partly historical and places greater emphasis on subject-matter types than does Heilman's division of stories into the traditional technical aspects of point of view, theme, character study, and symbolism. Although the Heilman is superior as a restricted critical text, the Hall and Langland, though it suffers from cross-breeding of purposes, is in many respects the more imaginatively edited book and contains a fresher selection of stories.

For the introductory course in fiction which places its main emphasis on novels and for which a relatively inexpensive supplementary text introducing students to the art of fiction and a method of analysis is desired, I should especially recommend either Fred B. Millett's *Reading Fiction: A Method of Analysis with Selections for Study* (Harper, 1950, \$2.50) or Adrian H. Jaffe and Virgil Scott's *Studies in the Short Story* (Dryden, 1949, \$1.95 paperbound). The ten stories in Millett's volume are, as the title indicates, subordinate to the system of analysis which the author presents in a long introduction. The method will seem unnecessarily involved to some teachers, and I am afraid that many of my students would resent being asked to apply five pages of questions to each story. Teachers and students willing to follow the method would, I am sure, profit from it. The Jaffe and Scott text approaches the problem of analysis more gradually by grouping 22 stories in easy-to-difficult "levels of reading," beginning with plot and ending with symbolism. The introductions to each section are of a high quality, and most of the stories are followed by analyses and questions.

Four critical anthologies that deserve in-

dividual attention as major texts are the well-known books edited by Schorer, Gordon and Tate, West and Stallman, and Brooks and Warren. I consider these books to be major texts not only because of their merit—they have attained recognition as significant works of criticism—but also because they may be used most effectively in courses for which they are the main textbooks. Instructors who want a minimum of critical apparatus or who require only a supplementary text will probably prefer less ambitious books.

Mark Schorer's *The Story: A Critical Anthology* (Prentice-Hall, 1950, \$3.95) contains 24 well-chosen stories international in scope and ranging from Maupassant to the present. Like its prototype, Brooks and Warren, as well as the Heilman, Jaffe and Scott, and Hall and Langland texts previously mentioned, the stories are arranged in terms of aspects of fiction. The progression here—story base, characters and action, surface and symbol, style and meaning, and towards the novel—makes the book especially useful in the introduction to fiction course which includes full-length novels. Because the analyses, study questions, and introductions are of the highest quality, both the teacher and the student can profit from using this book.

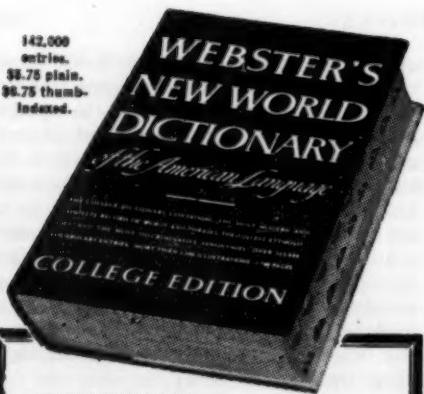
Gordon and Tate's *House of Fiction* (Scribners, 1950, \$4.50) contains 30 well-known stories—more classics than chestnuts—arranged in a roughly chronological order. The chief merit of the book is its fifteen extended commentaries and its valuable appendix on the techniques of fiction. The high-level tone of the criticism and the relative lack of schematization make it perhaps less appropriate for the introductory course than for more advanced courses, including both creative writing and the history of the short story.

The most militantly critical of all short story texts is the often praised and frequently abused *The Art of Modern Fiction* (Rinehart, 1949, \$5), by West and Stallman, which is not only an anthology but also a manual on the art of fiction with full analyses, each emphasizing different aspects of technique and theme, a glossary of technical terms, and essays on five frequently-taught novels. Although the 28 stories are arranged more or less historically, the analyses are

ordered progressively from the more simple to the more complex aspects. Some teachers find the criticism extravagant in spots—the celebrated "L" of "The Secret Sharer" or the axel of *Victory*, for instance—but largely because of the authors' enthusiastic and unapologetic devotion to fiction as an art-form, their comments seem to me more stimulating than objectionable. The many instructors who, held back by price and timidity, have used the West and Stallman book as a kind of glorified teacher's manual for other textbooks now have a chance to show their gratitude by adopting the new alternate edition—the 28 stories paperbound at \$1.95, with the critical matter in a separate manual. However, since students do profit from the critical discussions in the text, I should still prefer the regular edition.

Of Brooks and Warren's well-known *Understanding Fiction* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1943, \$3), it is perhaps sufficient to say that the 37 stories are international in scope, range in time from 1832 to 1942, and are ordered in a fully controlled progression from intentions, to plot, to characters, to theme, and to special problems; and that the critical apparatus includes analyses, questions, an excellent appendix on technical problems, and a glossary of terms. The model for practically all critical readers since 1943, it remains in many respects the best of the lot, and a multitude of successful adoptions would indicate that its special approach is a teachable one. To some extent, however, it has suffered from its success and from its imitations: the book that seemed revolutionary in 1943 has become assimilated to such an extent that much of the criticism seems cut-and-dried, the tone more defensive than seems necessary today, and some of the judgments and definitions in need of being brought up to date through revision. But these minor defects, which make the book less stimulating for the teacher who has used it for too many years, will not bother a new generation of students. By avoiding that attempt to please everybody which is the main fault of textbook editors, by offering a *worked-out* method of approaching fiction, Brooks and Warren succeeded in helping teachers to teach. And that, I think, is the main function of any textbook.

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